

# PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE  
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

No. 286.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 25, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

## DEAD FOR 5 YEARS! OR, THE MYSTERY OF A MADHOUSE.

*By ALLYN DRAPER.*



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*Joe Kragie*







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## DEAD FOR 5 YEARS

OR,

### The Mystery of a Madhouse.

By **ALLYN DRAPER.**

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE LAWYER AND HIS WARD.

Mr. J. Marley Leech was a lawyer.

At least, that was what the little sign on his office door down in Nassau Street said.

He had a large practice.

Yet he was rarely seen in a courtroom.

His business was not of the character that often called for legal conflicts before judges and juries.

He was a real estate and office lawyer.

And there were few better posted ones in all the great city of New York.

He was about sixty years of age, small, wiry, wrinkled, and partially bald, and as shrewd and cunning as the Evil One himself.

Hundreds of business men engaged in questionable transactions availed themselves of his peculiar talents every year to shield themselves from consequences.

But they paid dearly for all he did for them, and he grew rich on the proceeds of his advice to them and his quibbles before the judges.

Yet, knowing him as they did, all his clients had implicit confidence in him.

They left the management of many great estates in his hands, and he always accounted for every penny in a way that was very satisfactory to his clients.

An old college chum of his, named Caswell, had died five years before the opening of our story, leaving an only son fifteen years old, and a fortune of a quarter of a million dollars in his charge as guardian and executor.

The son, Bertrand Caswell, had graduated at college, and now, at the age of twenty, was living at a fashionable uptown lodging-house on a liberal allowance, which Leech paid him quarterly.

One day young Caswell came down to the lawyer's office to ask for a thousand dollars with which to pay for a horse which he had purchased.

"I cannot give it to you," said the lawyer, "until the beginning of the next quarter."

"Oh, you have told me that before," said the young man. "It's the old dodge. Let me have the money from your own growing pile, and deduct it from my allowance, with the usual interest, of course. I want the money and must have it."

"Yes—yes, and if I don't let you have it you will borrow it from somebody who will make you pay ten per cent for it."

"Of course I will. I'd rather pay ten per cent than have to submit to a lecture every time I want any extra money."

The lawyer smiled grimly.

"You know I stand as a father to you, Bertrand, and that my lectures, as you are pleased to call them, are all for your good."

"Yes—yes—write me the check without the lecture this time, please."

J. Marley Leech wrote out a check for \$1,000 and signed his name to it.

"There it is," he said, handing the check to the young man.

Bertrand took it and left the office as if only too glad to get away from the musty atmosphere of the dingy place.

"He is not a badly disposed boy," the lawyer said, as he reckoned up the interest he would receive on the amount he had advanced to him. "But he has little idea of the value of money. I fear he will run through the fortune his father left him in a very few years after he comes into possession of it. He is of a generous nature, and not in the least distrustful of those who flock around him now. His half-brother Marcellus was cut off with a paltry \$10,000, because he drank and gambled. I couldn't blame his father for that, as the young scapegoat ran through the 10,000 in less than six months. He is a confirmed gambler, and drinks like a fish."

Young Bertrand Caswell hastened to the bank and drew the money the check called for. Then, taking a Broadway stage, he rode uptown to a well-known stable, where he hoped to meet the owner of the horse he wanted to buy.

"Is Mr. Turner about?" he asked of the stableman in charge.

"No, he went downtown an hour ago," was the reply.

"When will he return?"

"I don't know."



"This afternoon?"

"Can't say."

"To-morrow morning?"

"Oh, yes; he's here every morning."

"At what hour?"

"About ten o'clock."

Bertrand took a card from his card-case, and, giving it to the stableman, said:

"Give him that card, and tell him that if he will call at that number, which is my boarding-house, this evening, he can have the cash for the horse, as I came here to pay him."

"Yes, sir," replied the stableman, taking the card and putting it in his pocket. "I'll tell him as soon as he comes in."

"Do so, please," and the young man turned away.

While he was talking to the stableman a dark, sinister-looking man, seated near the door, was listening to all that passed.

The moment young Caswell left the man turned to the stableman and asked:

"Lemme see his card, Bill?"

Bill showed him the card—a dainty bit of pasteboard, on which the name and address of Bertrand Caswell was beautifully inscribed.

"Humph! As dainty as a girl's," commented the man as he gave it back.

"Yes—style, you know, Jack."

"Yes—style—plenty o' money."

Jack Hubbard arose from his seat and walked off down the street in the same direction he had seen young Caswell go, while Bill turned to his duties in the stable."

That evening Bertrand Caswell remained at his boarding-house till nine o'clock, hoping that Turner, the owner of the horse he wanted to purchase, would call for the money.

But he came not, and the young man concluded to go out and visit the club-room till midnight, determined to be at the stables early the next morning to make sure of securing the horse he had taken such a fancy to.

When he returned to his rooms it was long after midnight.

He had just turned on the gas, when he heard footsteps behind him.

Turning suddenly around, he found himself face to face with a ferocious-looking man with a black mask concealing all the upper part of his face.

The man rushed at him with a sand-bag club upraised.

A look of unspeakable terror came into the face of Bertrand Caswell, and he was about to utter a wild yell of alarm, when the murderous sandbag descended upon his head with the force of a thunderbolt.

He sank to the floor without even the faintest groan escaping him, and the masked villain quickly knelt by his side and began rifling his pockets.

His watch, chain, wallet, and diamond ring were transferred to the pockets of the burglar, who hurriedly glanced around the room in quest of other plunder.

But fancying that he heard footsteps in the corridor outside, he hurriedly took up the shoes he had removed from his feet, and fled from the room.

Down the stairs he glided as noiselessly as a cat, and at the street door he slipped on his shoes, opened the door, and passed out as naturally as if he were one of the occupants of the house.

## CHAPTER II.

"I AM DEAD."

In the same house where Bertrand Caswell boarded lived a well-to-do widow and her daughter.

Mrs. Sedgwick had been a widow a number of years. Her

husband had left her a snug fortune, the interest of which supported her and her daughter Carrie in comfortable style.

She preferred boarding to keeping up an establishment, which accounts for her presence in the boarding-house, where she had been for three years at the time of which we write.

Carrie Sedgwick was not a very beautiful young lady, but she was a very pleasant, sociable person, and very popular with all her acquaintances.

She had a huge streak of romance running through her mental make-up, and was forever falling in love with some romantic or heroic character she had seen in some play at the theater.

Then she became stage-struck and wanted to go to the stage. But her mother objected so strenuously that she gave up the idea.

Yet she pored over Shakespeare day and night, till she had memorized all the tragedy of Macbeth.

She frequently gave the dagger scene for the amusement of the boarders, greatly surprising them by her remarkable imitation of a certain great actress.

On the night of the burglar's visit to the room of Bertrand Caswell, Carrie was in her apartments poring over her favorite volumes.

Dropping asleep in her easy-chair, she dreamed that she was Lady Macbeth.

In her dream she sprang to her feet, seized a lamp with one hand and her Macbeth dagger with the other, and went strutting about the room, repeating the lines of the dagger scene.

She passed out of her room into the corridor and glided noiselessly along toward the door of Caswell's room, which the burglar had left open but a minute or two before.

Still repeating the lines, she turned and passed into Caswell's room, and in another moment stumbled over his body in such a way that she fell heavily upon him, burying the dagger nearly to its hilt in his side.

The fall awoke her.

The lamp and dagger were both clutched in her hands.

She sprang to her feet, still holding the lamp and dagger, glared at the form on the floor and then uttered a piercing shriek.

The next moment she let drop the lamp.

The dagger dropped to the floor, and she sank down in a death-like swoon.

The oil from the broken lamp caught fire, and in a flash the carpet was ablaze. The room was quickly filled with smoke.

Carrie's scream alarmed the people in the house, and a rush of excited boarders followed.

Some one cried "fire!" and a scene of indescribable confusion took place.

One gentleman had the forethought to snatch a quilt from the bed and spread it over the burning carpet, thus smothering a conflagration that might have resulted in loss of life.

If the alarm of fire caused intense excitement in the house, the discovery of both Caswell and Miss Sedgwick unconscious on the floor created a first-class sensation.

"My God!" cried one, as he saw the bloodstains on his side, "he has been murdered! Look there at the blood!"

"Oh, mercy!" cried another. "And that is Carrie's dagger on the floor!"

"What can it mean?" cried the landlady. "Surely she did not do it, for they were the best of friends."

"Is she hurt?" another asked.

A man knelt by Caswell.

"Send for a doctor!" he said. "Caswell is not dead. His pulse beats yet."



A servant was at once sent for Dr. Radcliffe, who had been the physician of the Caswell family.

While waiting for the arrival of the doctor a gentleman took up the inanimate form of Miss Sedgwick and conveyed it to her apartment, which adjoined that of her mother.

The mother was frantic with grief.

But the presence of the doctor restored quiet in a measure. He was soon told all that was known of the mysterious affair.

"I'll see to him first," he said, "while you ladies can see if she is hurt in any way."

He then took charge of young Caswell and made an examination of the wound in his side.

"I don't think it touched any vital part," he said, "but it was a narrow shave. Just a half inch to the right would have proved fatal in a few hours."

He then searched for other wounds, and failed to find any.

"I don't see how such a wound could produce unconsciousness," he remarked, as he felt of Caswell's pulse and looked into his face, which seemed to have assumed the pallor of death.

"Doctor!" called the landlady, at the door of the room, "Miss Sedgwick is still unconscious, but we cannot find that she is in any way hurt."

"Then it is a mere swoon, I guess," remarked the doctor. "I will attend to her in five minutes."

After applying restoratives to young Caswell in vain, the doctor turned his attention to Carrie Sedgwick.

It did not take him five minutes to bring her out of the faint.

She opened her eyes, groaned, glared around the room, and then uttered a piercing scream.

"Is he dead?" she cried, trying to arise from the bed upon which she had been placed.

"Who do you mean?" the doctor asked.

"Bertrand Caswell. I saw him lying dead at my feet when I suddenly woke up out of my walking sleep. I must have been walking all about the house late in my sleep, for I sat up late reading Macbeth, and fell asleep in my chair. The shock was so great that I must have fainted. I remember uttering a scream and felt myself falling, but I cannot remember anything after that."

Her story made the whole affair all the more mysterious. She claimed that when she suddenly awoke she found him lying like a dead person at her feet.

If that was true, he must have been hurt by some other person, unless she had stabbed him in her sleep without knowing it.

It was her dagger that was found lying by his side.

That seemed to contradict her story.

Yet every one in the house knew that she was a somnambulist—in the habit of walking in her sleep.

"He can enlighten us," remarked one of the boarders, as the doctor again returned to Caswell's side.

But the young man was still unconscious, lying on the bed more like a dead than a live person.

The doctor proceeded to do all in his power to restore him to consciousness, and all the known remedies at hand were applied, but without effect.

All through the rest of the night did he and several of the boarders labor with him. Still he remained like a dead man, save that the heart and pulse beat feebly.

"It's a strange case," remarked the doctor. "He has received a terrible shock. I shall apply electricity," and he went home for his galvanic battery about sunrise.

The electric shock seemed to have some effect upon him.

He squirmed about, opened his eyes, groaned audibly, and then relapsed into unconsciousness again.

Two other physicians were called in and a consultation was held over him. Another search of the entire body failed to find any wound save the one made by the dagger.

Somebody notified the police authorities of what had occurred, and two detectives were sent to the house to investigate.

Carrie Sedgwick told her story in a straightforward way, but they seemed somewhat incredulous.

"We shall have to arrest you, miss," said one of them, "until the young man can recover sufficiently to explain just how it happened. At present it looks as if you had tried to kill him."

On hearing that she was to be arrested, Carrie gave a piercing shriek and fainted dead away again.

Mrs. Sedgwick added her cries to the confusion that ensued, and for a time great excitement reigned in the house.

Restoratives were administered, and in a little while she was restored to consciousness. The officer held on to his determination, however, and the result was the sending for lawyers and the judge.

Bail was procured, and in a few hours she was bailed without the formality of going to court.

In the meantime, while they were working with Bertrand, some one made the discovery that his watch, chain, purse and diamond ring were gone.

"There has been a robbery here," said the detective, "which may throw some light on the case if a good search is made."

"Here comes Mr. Leech, who is Mr. Caswell's guardian," said one of the boarders, as the pinched face of the little old lawyer was seen entering the room.

"I have just seen an account of this affair in the papers," said the lawyer, looking at the unconscious form of his ward on the bed. "How is he, and how did it all happen?"

"We think there has been a robbery," said the detective, "for his watch, chain, purse and ring are all gone."

"And \$1,000 in cash gone with them. He came to me yesterday and got that amount of money."

The detective became interested.

"Did he say what he wanted with the money?" he asked of the lawyer.

"Yes—said he wanted to pay for a horse he had bought."

"I'll go to the stables and see if he bought a horse anywhere."

And the detective left the house.

In the meantime young Caswell began to show signs of regaining consciousness.

He groaned, opened his eyes and looked around the room.

"How do you feel, Bertrand?" the doctor asked, leaning over him.

"I am dead," was the reply.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A DIABOLICAL PLOT.

When J. Marley Leech reached his office the next morning he saw a young man in the little private room awaiting him.

He recognized him at a glance as Marcellus Caswell, Bertrand's half brother, who had been cut off with a small sum by his father because of his gambling and dissipated habits.

"Ah! You here?" the lawyer said.



"Yes, I am here," was the quiet reply.

"Well, what are you here for?"

"For advice and information."

"Are you in need of legal advice?"

"Yes."

"In trouble, eh? You've kept out of trouble much longer than I expected you would. What's the matter now?"

"I want to know how Bertrand is?"

Leech's eyes snapped as he gazed at the young gambler.

"What interest have you in him?"

"None whatever; but I hope to have an interest in the property which stands in his name. I want to know if he has made a will?"

"Why do you want to know that?"

"You know that as well as I do, you confounded old shark. You want a fee. I know you. Here are fifty dollars as a retainer, or whatever you may choose to call it. Now, tell me whether my brother has made a will."

"Why do you want to know that?"

The lawyer grabbed the money and stowed it away in his pocket ere he made reply to the question of the visitor.

But when he spoke he said:

"Yes—he made a will."

"Who drew it?"

"I did."

"What are its contents?"

"Secret."

"Does he leave me anything in it?"

"Not a cent—all for public charities."

A wave of anger swept across the face of the young gambler.

"He is not dead yet," suggested the lawyer.

"No."

"And the will is not good until he is dead."

"Yes, I know that. But if he dies without leaving a will would not I, as next of kin, inherit the property?"

"Yes."

"So I thought. Now, look here, Leech. If I inherit that estate one-half of it shall go to you. Do you understand?"

The lawyer looked at him with his small, ferret-like eyes, as if in utter ignorance of his meaning.

The young gambler returned his gaze unflinchingly, and asked:

"Do you understand me?"

"I don't think I do," was the reply.

"Well, if my brother dies leaving a will I get nothing."

"Yes."

"If he dies without a will I get everything."

"Yes, of course."

"Well, now, if he does die without a will I will share the estate equally with you. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, I think I do. Come back here in an hour and I will talk to you."

The young gambler looked hard at him for a moment or two, and then said:

"I'll come, but if you play me false, beware."

"All right, all right, young man," said the lawyer. "You can't frighten me."

"Maybe I can't; but I can get away with you, all the same, if you come any of your games on me."

"Don't worry yourself, my boy. Come back in an hour, and I will talk to you."

The young gambler went away, and the old lawyer sat down at his desk and rested both elbows upon it. His head rested in both hands, and his thoughts ran rapidly through a series of mental calculations.

"There is no will," he said to himself, "but nobody knows

that. Marcellus thinks there is. He would inherit the property if Bertrand died intestate. He offers to give me half the property if the will never turns up after Bertrand's death. That is a big offer—over \$100,000—considerably over. On the other hand, if Bertrand continued insane, I would have control of the estate, but would have to make statements to the courts as to its condition. On the whole, it would be better for him to die and let the estate be divided. I'll get him into a madhouse and see that he stays there until he dies, and the world forgets him. If I don't close with the offer Marcellus makes he'll consult other counsel who might go into court and demand that part of the estate be given him, on the ground that an insane person does not need the income of such a large property. Being the prospective heir, he would have that right. I'll close with the offer and get him in a madhouse just as soon as I can."

At the end of the hour Marcellus Caswell returned to the old lawyer's den and found him waiting for him.

"Well, what do you say to my offer?" he asked, as he seated himself in the chair he had occupied an hour before.

"Simply this: that if he dies there will be no will found."

"All right. That is understood, then."

"Yes—and that in such event I am to have one-half the property."

"Yes."

"I shall hold to the will until the division is made, as my security."

"Yes—that's right, only you must let me see it destroyed."

"Of course."

Then there was a silence of several minutes, which was finally broken by the half brother asking:

"But if he does not die, and yet remains insane? What then?"

"He will go to a madhouse."

"Well, what good would that do me?"

"Once in a madhouse, he is as good as dead, so far as the outside world is concerned."

Marcellus Caswell started as if suddenly stung, and glared at the old lawyer as if astonished at what he had heard.

"Do you understand me?" the old lawyer asked.

"Yes, I think I do. We are to have it whether he dies or not."

"Exactly."

"But if he regains his reason as he recovers from his wound?"

"That would leave us out. I will get him into a madhouse as soon as possible. Return of reason would do him no good there. He would be dead, so far as we are concerned."

"Yes—yes. And see here," and the gambler leaned forward and whispered in his ear something that caused the old lawyer to turn pale and tremble like a leaf.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HALF BROTHER.

The peculiar phase of Bertrand Caswell's mental condition was a puzzle to all the medical men who saw him. They did everything in their power to prove to him that he wasn't dead, but all in vain.

He had but that one idea in his head, and seemed to be puzzled all the time as to where he was. His identity was lost—did not even know his name, and could tell nothing coherent about what had happened to him on that eventful night.

His guardian came to see him every day, to look to his im-



provement and see for himself if there was any chance for him to recover his reason.

"Do you think he will ever recover, doctor?" he asked of Dr. Radcliffe.

"That is a difficult question to answer, Mr. Leech," said the doctor. "While there is life there is hope. He is young—was once sane. He may recover—no one can tell what may happen."

"Yes, yes—that's so. But do you not think that he would have a better chance of recovering if he were placed in some good asylum where money would procure him the necessary attention?"

"Yes, I think it would be better for him and better for his friends; but it is better to wait till his wound is cured."

"Oh, yes. I will leave that entirely in your hands, doctor. Give him all the attention he needs and send your bill in to me."

Out on the street the old lawyer indulged in a series of chuckles.

"Sorry for the boy," he said, "but he will have to go to the madhouse. I have selected the one for him. The keeper loves gold, and what money tells him to do will be done. One half to me and the other to the gambler. His will go to the till of the gaming-table, and mine will grow—grow—grow all the time. Sorry for the boy, though."

Poor Carrie Sedgwick watched the young man with the keenest interest. He alone could save her from the terrible charge that had been made against her, for he was the only witness to the tragedy.

That she had done aught to harm him she could not believe. Yet they told her that the dagger she had let fall to the floor when she fell in a swoon was covered with blood.

Daily she watched his progress toward recovery of the wound. His mental condition grew stronger also, but he could say nothing that would relieve her in the least.

The idea that he was dead and living in another world had taken possession of him. He did not know even his own name, or that of any of his friends, except to recognize them as being immortals also.

Yet she did not doubt that some day he would recover his reason and exonerate her from the terrible charge of being a would-be murderess.

He finally began to notice her, and one day asked her if she were one of the angels.

"Yes," she said, laughing. "Do I look like one?"

He looked at her with innocent, child-like wonder for several minutes without saying a word.

After that he seemed to have a special liking for her, and when she came into the room he was contented to gaze upon her as a child would gaze at a beautiful picture.

The wound in his side healed rapidly, owing to a naturally good constitution, and in a fortnight he was able to sit up in bed. From the bed he gradually got into the big armchair.

But his mental improvement was not so marked.

He could throw no light whatever on the occurrences of that fatal night, though the doctors did all they could to aid him.

To all questions he gave a blank look, and when he spoke it was to assert that he was dead.

At other times he would talk with Miss Sedgwick, but of the past he knew nothing—could not remember anything of his life beyond that terrible night.

"He must go to some home for insane people," said Leech, his guardian, one day to the physician, "where his means will procure him the attention of those who make insanity a specialty."

"Yes, I really think that would be the best course to pursue," assented the doctor, "and I will let you know when his physical condition will admit of removal."

"Thanks. But tell me, doctor, do you think there is any prospect of his recovering his reason?"

"I don't see why he should not. Time works wonders sometimes, you know."

"Yes, so it does. Well, we'll hope for the best, anyhow. Do you know which is the best asylum to place him in?"

"No, I do not."

"Well, I'll try to find out," and the old lawyer took his leave, and wended his way downtown to his office.

When he reached there he found young Marcellus Caswell in the little office adjoining the main room.

"How is he?" the gambler asked.

"Crazy as a loon," was the reply.

"Why don't you send him to a mad-house at once, and be done with it?"

"Time enough for that, my dear boy. It won't do to have people say we were anxious to hurry him off. Wait until the general opinion pronounces him insane, and then, when he does go, everybody will say it was the best thing to do, and they will then proceed to forget that such a fellow ever lived."

"Time does not wait for me," said the gambler. "I always have to come to time, and very often it is more than I can do."

"Oh, if you are in need of money, I can let you have some," remarked the lawyer.

"Good Lord! I am in need of it all the time, and if you will let me have some I will——"

"Oh, I won't take your promise for anything," said the lawyer, interrupting him. "I am simply willing to take the chances, but will charge accordingly."

"Oh, that's all right."

"Well, give me your note for \$2,000 and I will give you \$1,000 for it."

"That's a big interest."

"So it is; but if Bertrand should recover his mind I'd be out \$1,000, wouldn't I? You see the risk I run. Give me security and I'll let you have it at six per cent."

"Of course I can't do that. Just make out the note and I'll sign it."

The note was made out, signed in the presence of the confidential clerk, who went to the bank for the money, which was handed over to the young gambler.

"Now don't go and gamble that money away to-night, and come back here dead broke to-morrow," said the old lawyer. "Don't ever carry but ten dollars with you at a time, and you will thus save yourself from being drawn into a trap to lose all you have."

"I won't play any more."

"How many times have you said that in the last year?"

"I don't know. I'd be willing to wager that you'll lose the whole of that sum within a week, when it ought to support you for a year."

The young man went away, and the lawyer made another entry in a small memoranda he carried in his pocket.

"It's a risk," he said to himself, "but it is necessary to keep him quiet and have a grip on him. As long as he sees the game working he'll keep as dumb as a clam. When I have the other one in the madhouse I'll hold Marcellus off till he has borrowed his share of the estate at the rate of two dollars for one. Then we'll have a settlement and wind up the business. Ah! It will pay better than I at first thought. One insane and the other a spendthrift gambler. Between the two I shall see that the bulk of the estate remains intact."

The next time the lawyer called on his ward he found him talking cheerfully with Carrie Sedgwick. But he could say nothing of the past. Only the present and the future, believ-



ing himself in another world altogether. He did not know any of his friends save as he made their acquaintance again.

"How does his wound progress?" Leech asked.

"Oh, he is getting over that fast," said Carrie.

"And his head?"

She shook her head and looked pityingly at the young man.

"What a pity!" said the guardian, "and he so young and handsome, too."

"Yes—what a pity," murmured Carrie.

"If he never recovers you can never be convicted of the charge against you," remarked Leech.

"And if he does recover his testimony would clear me fully," she replied.

"No doubt of that. The case is the strangest one I ever heard of," and the old lawyer took his leave as quietly as he had entered.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LAWYER'S SCHEME—THE BARGAIN.

A few days after J. Marley Leech let Marcellus Caswell have \$1,000 on a \$2,000 note he notified Skinner, his confidential clerk, that he would be away from the office for a day or two.

"Yes," sir," said the clerk.

The lawyer left the office and went home, and the next day took a carriage, which he hired for the day, and was driven up into Westchester County, a good distance beyond the city limits.

It was a long ride, and required a great deal of patience. But of all men in the world, J. Marley Leech was one of the patient ones.

He had followed certain game for years, and bagged them at last, when, had he been the least impatient, he would have failed.

After five hours' riding the carriage came in sight of a big, irregularly-built stone house, which stood back from the road about the eighth of a mile.

Several acres of ground were inclosed by a high iron fence, with a gate near the road.

Leech stopped the carriage at the gate, got out, and told the driver to wait for him.

He pulled a wire which ran up to the dismal-looking stone house, and a moment or two later a man came out.

"What do you want?" the man asked, when he came down to the gate.

"I want to see the manager."

"All right—come in," and he opened a small side gate for him.

Leech entered and walked up to the house with the guide.

At the house he was met by a large man with a grizzled beard and a hard expression in his eyes.

"That's the doctor," said the guide.

"Are you Dr. Crabbe?" Leech asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I want to see you."

"Who are you?"

"J. Marley Leech, lawyer."

"Where from?"

"The city."

"Very well. Come into my private office."

He followed him into a little private office just off from the main entrance.

There they both sat down, facing each other.

"You keep a madhouse?"

"No," said Crabbe. "I keep a private asylum for the insane."

"Ah! So you do. I beg pardon."

"Well?"

"I have a patient—a ward—who has gone clean daft—crazy as a loon."

"Well?"

"I want him placed where he will be taken good care of and properly treated."

"Well?"

"And I want to know how much per month I will have to pay."

"Is he violent?"

"No; at least, he has not shown any disposition to be so."

"How long has he been so?"

"About a fortnight, I believe."

"Oh, it is temporary, then?"

"We don't know. It may last his life-time. We'll make the calculation that way, anyhow."

"Ah, yes, I understand."

"You do?"

"Yes, I think I do. You want to know our terms for keeping a young insane person, giving him good treatment, as long as he lives?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Well, it will cost \$200 per month."

"So much as that?"

"Yes—for life, you know."

"Yes, I understand."

"Those are our terms."

"You will keep him safe?"

"Yes."

"Never let him get away?"

"Never."

"Nor communicate with anyone?"

"No."

"Nor dismissed as cured?"

"Only with your consent."

"Ah, yes!" and the lawyer's eyes snapped. "How about the pay?"

"Quarterly—in advance."

"You want six hundred dollars down, then?"

"Yes—and certificate of Commission of Physicians."

"Yes—he is as crazy as a loon now."

"Very well. When will you have him here?"

"In a week or two."

"Why so long?"

"Don't wish to be hasty."

"Yes—right."

"You don't allow visitors, do you?"

"Only interested ones—such as you would be. All others must have an order from you to see him."

"Good! Here's the first quarter now. Give me a receipt."

The madhouse keeper wrote a receipt for one quarter's board and keeping for Bertrand Caswell, to date from the day the patient arrived.

Leech handed over the money, which the other carefully counted, and took the receipt.

"We understand each other fully, do we?" Leech asked.

"Yes, fully."

"I am to be informed of anything that may occur?"

"Oh, yes—once a week."

"Do your patients ever die?"

"Oh, yes. Everybody must die."

"Yes, I know."

"They die, of course," added Crabbe.

"So they do. You will consult my wishes in everything pertaining to him?"

"Yes."

"Well, let me know if one should die while he is here."



"Yes."

"Well, he'll arrive in a week or two," said Leech, rising to take leave of the doctor.

"Very well. I shall be ready for him."

They shook hands and parted.

The man who opened the gate for him accompanied Leech back to that point.

As he was leaving the gate the lawyer slipped a five-dollar bill into the man's hand, at the same time making a significant gesture that called for silence.

The man merely nodded his head as he grasped the bill in his brawny palm.

"Back to the city," said Leech to the driver as he entered the carriage.

The carriage rolled leisurely back toward the great city, and the little old lawyer lolled back in the cushioned seat and reflected on what he had done.

"It cost money," he muttered, "but it had to be done. That fellow will take care that he does not get away. He loves money more than any man I ever met, and would do anything to get it. I've heard of him before—yes, ten years ago—but never thought I would ever have any use for him. I won't let anyone know where he is when once he is there. Nobody but his brother will have any legal right to look him up. Nobody else will think of him a month after he is sent here. The insane are forgotten as quickly as the dead are. I think the six hundred dollars paid out to-day a good investment. A thousand or two may wind it up altogether. I'll make the expenses high enough—on paper—to make Marcelus' half pay it all."

Such were the lawyer's reflections.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SCENE IN THE PARK—TO THE MADHOUSE.

One day, soon after Leech's visit to the madhouse, Dr. Radcliffe said to Carrie Sedgwick, after he had again talked with Bertrand Caswell:

"I have a theory in regard to his mental condition which I wish to test by experiment, with your assistance."

"I am your service, doctor," she said.

"Thanks. I believe that a terrible shock unbalanced his mind. I wish to see if a sudden surprise or shock will not have the contrary effect."

"Well, what can I do?"

"You can do much. He is like an obedient child with you. He is now able to walk out anywhere. It is but a short distance to the park. Take him to walk there, and when you reach some very secluded spot I'll have a man rush out upon you both with a big dagger in his hand, to make believe that he is actually going to kill him. The shock may have the effect to bring him back to his right mind."

"Oh, yes—if it only would! Doctor, I will do anything you say, for there are mean, spiteful people who say that I did try to kill him."

"Yes, I know that."

"You don't believe them?"

"No, indeed."

"Oh, thanks! Please tell me what I am to do and I will do it."

The doctor gave the necessary instruction, and then went away to get a friend to act as the assailant in the matter.

The next day she persuaded him to dress himself in another suit of clothes and go out for a walk with her.

He obeyed her in everything, and in a little while was ready to accompany her, looking as natural as life.

To all appearances he was as sane as ever he was.

Taking his arm, she walked with him over to the park, where the rambles led through some very secluded spots.

In a dark spot a man lurked, waiting for them to pass.

Carrie saw him and nerved herself for the ordeal.

As they passed out into an open space the man rushed upon them, fiercely exclaiming:

"I have you now! Die like a dog!" and he raised a murderous looking dagger as if to plunge it to the hilt in Bertrand's breast.

Bertrand looked at him a moment or two, as if to divine his intentions, and then coolly drew a revolver from his pocket, and pointed the muzzle to within a foot of the man's head.

The man turned ashen-hued.

Carrie dropped her parasol and sprang back with a scream.

The man slunk away a few paces, and then turned and fled at the top of his speed.

Bertrand dropped the revolver to the ground and picked up Carrie's parasol, which he handed to her.

She looked at him inquisitively.

He did not seem to be even conscious of what had happened.

"Come, let's go," she said, taking his arm again and leading him away.

He went along as obediently as a child, while Dr. Radcliffe and a friend went forward and took up the revolver, which they found to be unloaded.

"He could not have killed the man," said the friend.

"No—what a blessing!"

"I was never so frightened in my life."

"Nor I."

"What a puzzle he is!"

"Yes—I wonder if it is his pistol?"

"It shows that he has a little reason about him."

"Yes—or it was the natural instinct of self-defense."

"It must be, for he dropped it to the ground the moment the man ran away."

"Yes—yes—we must look into this."

Carrie led him back to the house, while the man who had been asked to play the part of assailant rejoined the doctor and his friend.

"Do you know you came near causing me to lose my life?" he said to the doctor.

"No."

"Why, he clapped a revolver to my head!"

"Yes."

"Well, that was too dangerous to make it pleasant."

"Yes, but we never dreamed that he had a pistol. Here it is—it is unloaded."

The gentleman drew a long breath of relief, and exclaimed:

"Well, I am glad it wasn't loaded. Yet I'd as soon be killed as scared to death. I never had such a fright in all my life."

The doctor laughed and explained the affair to the satisfaction of his friend, and then they went to the house of the patient to make inquiries about the revolver.

It was ascertained that he had put on a pair of trousers that day which had been hanging up in his wardrobe for a month, and that the unloaded weapon had probably been in the hip-pocket during all that time.

Two days later the physician related the incident to Leech, and the two had a hearty laugh over it.

"So he is not so crazy after all, eh?" said the lawyer.

"Oh, there can be no doubt whatever of his insanity," returned the doctor.

"Well, I'll ask for a commission of lunacy and have him examined at once."

"Yes, that's the best course."

On the way downtown the lawyer chuckled:

"They may bring him to his senses, but they must do it before he is sent away or it will be forever too late. I am



going to have him up there with Dr. Crabbe before he is a week older."

The next day, at the request of the guardian of the young man, the court appointed three physicians to examine Bertrand Caswell's mental condition.

They met and spent half a day with him, and the result was a unanimous opinion that he was insane.

The court granted leave to the guardian to have him placed in an institution for the insane.

"His means will secure him the best treatment and accommodations in the country," said the guardian as he left the courtroom with the papers in his hands.

Two days later he drove up to the house, accompanied by an officer of the court, and said that Bertrand would have to go with them.

"Where to?" Carrie asked.

"To an asylum," he replied.

"Oh, my God! To a madhouse?" and she gave a groan and sank down in a swoon at the feet of the old lawyer.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN THE MADHOUSE.

Like a lamb being led to the slaughter, young Bertrand Caswell gave no trouble to his guardian on the way to the madhouse.

He knew not where he was going.

He thought he had to go, and so went along as quietly as the old lawyer could wish.

No one had any legal right to interfere, as all was done under the forms of law. The guardian was a lawyer, and the presence of an officer of the court invested the proceeding with all the forms of legality necessary under the circumstances.

The carriage made the trip as before, and in due time arrived at the madhouse, where Dr. Crabbe met the lawyer and his charge.

"Doctor, here are the papers in regard to this young man's case," said the officer who had accompanied him, handing the papers to the madhouse keeper.

Dr. Crabbe looked over the papers and found the report of the commissioners of lunacy indorsed by the court all right.

He bowed to the officer, and said:

"It is all right. The patient shall have all the attention we are capable of giving him, and we are not without hope that a cure may soon be effected, judging from what I have heard of his case."

The preliminaries were soon arranged, and then the guardian prepared to leave.

"Doctor," said Leech, as he shook hands with the madhouse keeper, "give him the best of care and attention, regardless of the expense. I give you full charge of him. After a month or two I will have him examined again. If you can cure him I shall be only too glad to donate \$10,000 to your institution."

"We shall do all we can to bring him around to his former mental condition," returned Crabbe.

The lawyer and officer then came away and rode leisurely back to the city. All the way back Leech was lamenting the sad misfortune of the bright young mind which had so suddenly become unbalanced.

The officer was familiar with the history of the case, and asked:

"Do you think the young lady whose dagger was found in his room that night really stabbed him?"

"Yes, I do; but I am unable to say whether she intended to do so, or was even conscious of doing so. The dagger was hers. She was found unconscious on the floor by his side. She tells the story of how she found herself there, and no one has so far been able to say anything to the contrary. They all say in the house that she is a somnambulist, and therefore much given to walking about in her sleep and declaiming parts of Shakespeare's plays."

"Yes, I heard as much myself," said the officer.

"Oh, there's no question of that. It's a case of mystery all the way through. He was undoubtedly robbed by somebody that night, and nothing belonging to him has been found in her possession, I believe."

"Well, the prosecution will have no ground to stand on unless the young man recovers his reason and gives his side of the story."

"Very true," said the lawyer; but the prosecution will not bring the case into court until they do have his testimony, nor will the defense do so either, if they can help it. That's how that matter stands."

While the guardian was riding back to the city young Caswell was going through an experience at Crabbe's madhouse that would have aroused the indignation of his friends, had they known of it.

Immediately after Leech left the place Crabbe led Bertrand into a room which was strongly barred, and proceeded to ascertain the peculiar bent of his mind.

"Do you know where you are?" he asked.

"No, I do not," he replied, looking around the room. "I only know that I am dead."

"Yes, that's true. You understand that you are in the other world, do you?"

"Yes."

"Well, one has to learn the way of doing things in this world by degrees. So you must keep quiet and be a good boy, and you will have a better time than you ever had before. You must stay here in this room until I take you out of it for a better one."

"But won't I be allowed to go out and walk under the trees?"

"No, not at present."

Bertrand turned to leave the room without saying another word.

The stalwart Crabbe sprang forward and caught him, saying, in a brutal tone:

"You must stay here, sir, or be chained," and he jerked him around with an energy that made his teeth rattle.

Bertrand was a mere child in his hands.

He made no resistance whatever, but sat down on the edge of the bed in his room and looked the keeper straight in the face.

"You must keep perfectly quiet," said the keeper, very firmly, and then he went out and locked the door behind him.

Bertrand sat there on the bed, staring at the door for more than four hours, scarcely moving hands or feet.

Then he laid back on the bed and went to sleep.

When he awoke it was dark—too dark for him to see anything in the room. So he lay there and gave way to a long train of thought.

By and by he got up and undressed himself and went to bed, as he had always done.

On opening his eyes in the morning he saw some bread, potatoes and cold tea on a tray which had been placed there the night before when he slept.

Having eaten no supper, he was very hungry, as a matter of course. The sight of the food whetted his appetite, and he proceeded to devour it.



It was such fare as he had never eaten before in all his life. Yet he ate it with great gusto, and wished for more.

A little while after he had disposed of the dry bread, potatoes and tea the door opened and a burly assistant keeper came in with his breakfast.

"Are you hungry?" the man asked.

"Yes, though I have just eaten some bread and potatoes," replied Bertrand.

"Well, here's some coffee and toast," and the man placed the tray on the little table.

"Thanks," and Bertrand ate the toast and drank the coffee with the greatest relish imaginable, while the assistant watched him closely.

"Tut, tut," muttered the man. "His is a harmless kind of insanity. He won't give any trouble."

Then he began to talk with him by asking him questions about many current events. But the blank ignorance of everything in life on the part of the patient was soon manifest, and when he claimed that he was dead the man understood something of his peculiar phase of insanity.

"He is harmless. Won't give any trouble at all," he said, as he came out of the room. "When a man believes he is dead his lunacy is of the quiet, dreamy sort, that never finds vent in violence of any kind."

Dr. Crabbe was of the same opinion regarding him.

"But he is to be kept in his room," said the doctor, "and not allowed to go out under any consideration."

The man did not appear to be in the least surprised at the doctor's words.

He had been there too long not to know that the roofs of private madhouses covered some of the most diabolical crimes of the age; that victims were often buried alive there in living tombs.

To all the doctor said the assistant simply bowed his head, and then proceeded to obey orders.

When he visited the room again he found our hero somewhat restless under the confinement.

"Where is Carrie?" he asked of the assistant.

"Carrie who?" Dugall asked.

"Why, one of the angels. She was one of the first to greet me when I came here."

"I don't know her," said the man, who understood the matter. "There are so many angels in this great big world that one cannot know them all."

"I'd soon find her if you would let me out of this room. Why do you lock me up this way?"

"Oh, every one has to be locked up awhile when they first come. I don't understand it, but it's a rule, and we all have to submit to it."

"It's strange. I wonder where she is?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Won't they let her come and see me?"

"Perhaps they may. I'll ask about it for you."

"Do so, please. Tell her to come and get me out of this place. She is such a good, beautiful angel that she can do anything."

Dugall went out, convinced that Bertrand Caswell would never give them any trouble in his keeping.

The incident created a great deal of excitement at the time, and many were of the opinion that she, too, was on the verge of insanity.

Dr. Radcliffe was called in and after an hour of patient work, he succeeded in restoring her to consciousness.

Her first thought was of Caswell.

"They've taken him away!" she cried, wringing her hands. "He could never harm any one—so mild and patient and quiet. Oh, why did they take him away? The shadow of a dark crime will hover over me now as long as I live. Oh, my heart is broken! I wanted to prove by my devotion to his comfort that I would be the last one in the world to harm him. Oh, where have they taken him? Oh, where has he gone?"

"You must keep quiet, Carrie," said the doctor, "or you may bring on an attack of brain fever."

"I don't care if I do," she answered. "I would rather die than live under this cloud, and he who might soon be able to clear me locked up in a madhouse, where people are never cured, but grow madder and madder all the time."

Her words made a deep impression on those who heard her, and the landlady asked the doctor:

"Is it true that people who are sent to madhouses are never cured, doctor?"

"Very few people ever become sane who were once insane," replied the doctor, gravely.

That seemed to destroy the last hope of Carrie Sedgwick, who up to that moment had unshaken faith that Caswell would some day recover sufficiently to declare her innocence.

She wept long and hopelessly, and at last lay like one more dead than alive from sheer exhaustion.

When she recovered sufficiently to sit up and converse upon the subject, she insisted that there was some ulterior motive behind the removal of Bertrand to a madhouse.

"He was harmless," she said—"had never shown the least disposition to be violent. His income, or allowance, is large enough to procure him all the attendance and treatment he could possibly need. Why, I would have taken charge of him without the least hesitation or fear. He is as docile as a child, and obeyed me implicitly in everything. Won't some one ask his guardian where he carried him? I must see him at least every week."

She was confined to her room for several days for fear that her health would be imperiled if she went out.

But on the fifth day after her very severe swoon she called a carriage, and, accompanied by a lady friend, drove down to Nassau street, and called on Mr. J. Marley Leech.

The old lawyer was rather surprised to see her, and was at a loss to know to what cause he was indebted for the visit.

"Mr. Leech," she said, as she entered the office, "I have called to inquire as to Mr. Caswell's condition. Can you tell me how he is?"

"I have not seen him since the day he entered the asylum," he replied; "but I have had two reports from the physician in charge, saying that he is well, comfortable, and apparently happy."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear that! But it was really cruel to take him to a madhouse, Mr. Leech. His income is enough to support him at home and give him all the attendance he would need."

"You forget that insane people are not allowed to run loose when they have been pronounced insane by the proper authorities," said the guardian.

"But he was harmless."

"Yes—so he was, and is yet. But if I, as his guardian, allowed him to remain without restraint or proper treat-

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MEETING ON THE STAIRS.

The reader will, no doubt, recollect that when Bertrand Caswell was taken away to be consigned to the madhouse, Carrie Sedgwick, who had been accused of attempting to kill him, gave a shriek and fell to the floor in a swoon.



ment for a cure of his malady, I should be held responsible for it. I have done what I think is best for him."

"Where has he been taken?"

"That I am not at liberty to say."

She gazed at him in surprise.

"The physicians in charge instructed me to keep his whereabouts a profound secret, in order that none of his friends may annoy him with attentions. They know what is best for him under the circumstances."

Carrie turned red in the face, and retorted:

"I don't care to annoy him or any one else with attentions. But you forgot that I have more interest in his recovery than any living person. I am indicted for attempted murder. He is the only witness who could clear me of the terrible charge."

"Yes—yes, and I hope they will soon have him in a condition to testify at your trial."

"But I may be able to aid in doing that, and it would add so much to my peace of mind."

"You surely have no knowledge of the treatment of insanity," said the old lawyer.

"Of course not; but I think——"

"Oh, I can't accede to your request, Miss Sedgwick," said he, interrupting her. "I am forbidden to do so by his keepers and physicians."

"Well, I'll see if my lawyer can't compel you to at least reveal his whereabouts," said Carrie, as she turned to leave the room.

The lawyer made no reply, and she and her friend passed out without anything more being said.

On the stairs they met a handsome young man coming up the flight.

Carrie caught her foot in her skirt some way, and would have fallen headlong to the bottom of the stairs had not the young man caught her in his arms.

"Ah, sir!" she exclaimed. "You have saved me from a terrible fall. Please accept my thanks for your kindness."

"Certainly, miss," he said, lifting her up so as to stand her on her feet again. "I am glad to have rendered you assistance. I hope you are not hurt in any way."

"Thanks, sir, not in the least."

She then attempted to pass and go on down the stairs. He turned and ran down ahead of her, and led the way out to the carriage.

As he assisted her into the carriage, he asked:

"Can I have the pleasure of knowing the lady of such a singular meeting?"

She hesitated a moment, as if annoyed, and then said:

"My name is Miss Carrie Sedgwick."

The young man started as if stung and bowed quickly, as though to hide the look of surprise on his face.

A moment later the carriage rolled away and the young man re-entered the building and ascended the stairs again.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A PAIR OF VILLAINS.

"I say, Leech, what is Miss Sedgwick after?" exclaimed Marcellus Caswell, as he burst into the office of the old lawyer.

"Why, she is after Bertrand, of course."

"The deuce she is!"

"Yes."

"What does she want of him?"

"She wants to know where he is."

"You don't say so? What's her game?"

"Well, she says that she is interested in his recovery on account of the testimony he can give when her trial comes on, if he is sane enough to appear."

"You didn't tell her where he is?"

"Not much," replied the old lawyer, with a smile.

"And you are not going to, are you?"

"Hardly."

"What will she do about it, then?"

"She says she'll see if her lawyer can't find a way to compel me to reveal his whereabouts."

"Can he do that?"

"Well, he might, in the course of time, but I think a certificate of insanity will cause the judge to rule the application out of court entirely."

"But a sharp lawyer can give you some trouble about it, can't he?"

"Yes, and cause no little expense, too."

"Just so. Do you think she is any way mashed on him?"

"On whom?"

"Bertrand."

"Lord, no! She is too bright a girl for that. She is only worried about that indictment and, no doubt, thinks we may have had him removed to make sure of her conviction. Some people get queer ideas into their heads sometimes."

"Yes—yes—so they do," returned Marcellus. "I met her as I was coming up the stairs just now. She stumbled and fell right into my arms and would have been seriously hurt had not I caught her."

"Hello! Is that so?" exclaimed the lawyer.

"Yes. I assisted her down and into the carriage, where she told me her name was Sedgwick. Though I had never seen her before, I knew at once who she was."

"Did you give her your name?"

"No. I was too much confused at first, and the carriage drove off rather hastily, I thought."

"Well, I am glad she did not know you, as your coming here might have the effect of making a wrong impression on her mind."

"Well, I don't know about that. I am of the opinion that she may be able to give us some trouble. I like her appearance very much. If I pay court to her and win her she would be out of the way, you know."

"Yes, so she would. But I don't think you can win her."

"Why not?"

"Because she has heard that you are a gambler and a bad man generally. That would knock you out the first round."

"It would be against me, I know; but then, I could reform. Women have a liking for men who reform. Besides, I am not a very bad looking man."

Leech looked at the young man and shook his head, saying:

"It may all be very true. But I don't think you can make it work. She has a very bad opinion of you."

"Well, I'll try it, anyhow."

"Just as you please."

"Have you heard from him?"

"Yes—twice."

"How is he?"

"Just the same—no better, no worse."

"What's to be done?"

"Nothing at present."

"That's very pleasant for me—over the left."

"You will have to cultivate patience, my dear boy. The suspicions of people must not be aroused."

"Yes, I know that—I want another thousand dollars."



"What—so soon?"

"Yes."

"What have you done with the sum you got the other day? Been gambling?"

"No. I paid every dollar I owed, and now I am clear of debt."

"And you have not been gambling?"

"No. I have not touched a card since I received that money from you."

"And you want another thousand?"

"Yes."

The old lawyer made out a note for \$2,000, which Marcellus signed.

The confidential clerk went out and got the money on a check, and in a few minutes the young gambler had it in his pocket.

"I am going to add a few suits to my wardrobe," he said, "and then see if I can't cultivate Miss Sedgwick."

"Well, my advice to you is to let her alone. She is too sharp to be hoodwinked by you or any one else."

"Oh, I like her for herself."

The old lawyer smiled.

"You don't think I can make any impression there?"

"No—no good impression."

"Well, I shall try it, at any rate. But, see here, how long do you calculate that this thing will run this way?"

"That is a calculation I have not yet made."

"What is necessary to bring about a division of the property?"

"A certificate of the death of Bertrand Caswell," was the reply.

"But is he not as good as dead now?"

"Not quite. If some male inmate of the madhouse should die the doctor could give a certificate that Bertrand Caswell had died."

"Yes, yes. We must buy a corpse, send it up there, and have the certificate made out and the remains buried in good style. You have the doctor all right?"

"Oh, yes. He'll work the thing all right."

"Then I'll look out for a body that will answer our purpose. Go up and see the doctor about it, and have everything understood."

"I shall go up in a day or two," remarked the lawyer. "But let me caution you about what you are doing, young man. You should not touch one drop of liquor, for men who drink get drunk sometimes and give themselves dead away. You must not put a word on paper that you are not willing for all the world to see and understand. Then you don't want to go round about town inquiring for a dead man's body."

Marcellus burst out laughing.

"Why, you old villain," he said, "I can give you more points about such things than you ever dreamed of. I wasn't born yesterday."

"I am glad to hear that. Do you know where you can get a body?"

"No."

"Then you don't know the A. B. C. of the business. Scores are buried in Potter's field every day. A ten dollar bill will buy a body at any hour of the day out there."

"By George, old man! You are an older sinner than I thought you were. I will not get one now until after you have seen the doctor and made the arrangements with him."

"Very well. I'll go up in a day or two and see about it."

"Then I will call here in three days to see you."

The young gambler left the old lawyer's office and called on a well known Broadway tailor, of whom he ordered two fine suits of clothes. He paid for them in advance, saying:

"I had better pay now than take the chances of having the money when they are finished."

"That's a sensible view to take of it," remarked the tailor, taking the money and giving a receipt.

Marcellus passed out on to the street again and almost ran into Carrie Sedgwick and her lady friend whom he had met on the stairs of Leech's office that morning.

"Ah, beg pardon!" he said, bowing politely to the two ladies. "Strange we should meet again so soon."

They bowed smilingly and passed, both somewhat favorably impressed by his politeness.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE WOMAN IN THE CASE.

A few days after the visit of Carrie Sedgwick to the old lawyer's office in Nassau Street one of the city papers published a sensational article about the reformation of Marcellus Caswell, the disinherited half-brother of young Bertrand Caswell, whose melancholy fate had excited the sympathies of a host of friends.

Someone of the boarders, knowing her interest in Bertrand, showed her the paper.

She read it with the deepest interest, and said:

"I am so glad of that, though I have never seen him. They say he was awful fast."

"Yes," remarked the boarder, "and he is much better looking than his brother."

She made no reply to that remark, and the conversation dropped there.

But the next day she asked the gentleman who showed her the article:

"Do you know Mr. Marcellus Caswell?"

"I do not," he answered.

"Would you hunt him up for me?"

"Certainly; I would do anything for you, Miss Carrie."

"You know that I am charged with having stabbed Bertrand, and that he is the only witness who can clear me."

"Yes."

"He has been carried off to a madhouse by his guardian, who will not tell us where he is. I am naturally anxious to keep posted as to his condition, hence my desire to see Marcellus and ascertain from him where his brother is confined."

"Yes, I understand. I shall hunt him up for you to-day. Shall I ask him to call on you?"

"If you please."

"But would he do so?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I can soon find out."

The gentleman went among the gambling fraternity making inquiries for young Caswell. He found them all amused over the published report of his reformation. None of them believed that he had the remotest intention of reforming.

"Marcellus has been stuffing a reporter," remarked one of the gamblers.

"But where can I find him?"

"Down at Perry's Billiard Parlors," said one who was standing by.

He did find him there, and, on introducing himself, the gentleman said:

"I reside in the same house with Miss Sedgwick and her mother. The daughter wishes to see you in regard to your brother Bertrand, and has asked me to see if you would call on her at her residence."



"Certainly, and with the greatest pleasure. When shall I call?"

"This evening, if it would suit your convenience."

"My time is all my own, and one hour is as good as another to me."

"Very well. I shall say that you will call at eight o'clock this evening."

"Yes."

They bowed and parted, and the gentleman reported to Carrie, who proceeded to make preparations to fascinate the brother in order to win him to her purpose to tell her where Bertrand was.

Marcellus dressed himself in his best, and called at the appointed time.

Carrie entered the parlor with her lady friend who was with her when she called at the lawyer's office.

The moment she met him she recognized the young man who had saved her from a fall on the stairs.

"Why, are you Mr. Caswell?" she exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Yes, and you are Miss Sedgwick. What a singular coincidence."

They shook hands all round, and laughed heartily over the situation.

Both were good conversationalists, and at their best. Both desired to please, but for different reasons.

"I hope you do not misconstrue my request for you to call, Mr. Caswell," she said, after they were all three seated. "You know all about how my name has been mixed up in the terrible crime and mystery that surrounds Bertrand's fate?"

"Yes, I know all," he said, "but in my heart I have ever believed in your innocence."

"Oh, thank you! You don't know how grateful I feel for those words."

"I don't think that many people differ in that respect."

"I am not sure of that. Bertrand, if in his right mind, could clear me fully. He has been carried off by his guardian and locked up in a madhouse somewhere. That was cruel, for he was as harmless as an infant. I am anxious to know how he progresses toward recovery, as he is the one who can save me. If he does not recover his reason my whole life will be wrecked, for the cloud that now overshadows me may never pass away. You can understand, then, how anxious I am to know where he is and what his condition is."

"Yes, yes, of course, and it is but natural you should be concerned."

"I appeal to you, then, to tell me where he is."

"Ah, that is what I am utterly unable to do, for the reason that I do not know myself."

She looked surprised.

"When I met you on the stairs of Mr. Leech's office the other day, I was going up to make the very inquiry you now make to me. The old villain would not tell me anything, although he well knows that in the event of the death of my brother I would inherit the estate."

"What is his object in keeping it such a secret?"

"There is some mystery about it which I do not understand."

A troubled look came into her eyes.

"I am going to leave no stone unturned to find out where he is," said he, "and now that you are so deeply concerned, I shall work all the harder. I have turned over a new leaf—though I have never been as bad as some straight-laced people represented me to be. I never harmed anyone in all my life. But I drank wine and played cards, and for that I was disinherited. The punishment is greater than the crime."

"Yes, I have thought so too," remarked Carrie, sympathetically, "and I was glad when I heard what you had done. I am so glad you will assist me in trying to find where Bertrand is. How strange it is that his guardian will not let you know where your brother is!"

"Very strange, indeed, and yet one should never be surprised at anything that occurs nowadays."

He spent an hour with the two ladies, during which time he made himself extremely agreeable to both of them. Both were favorably impressed, and when he went away he carried with him a pressing invitation to call again.

"She is pleasant and sensible," he muttered to himself, as he strolled down the street, "and I think I can win her. When she hears that Bertrand is dead and that I am his heir, she won't give any trouble about it, but listen to my suit all the more willingly. I don't think she is up to any game at all, but is only solicitous about him on account of the indictment hanging over her."

The next day Marcellus called on Leech and told him about the visit and its result.

The old lawyer was astonished.

"You want to look out for that girl," he said. "Her lawyer is using her to put up a job on you. If you fall in love with her you are gone, for there's no trusting a man or woman in love under such circumstances."

The gambler smiled.

"I don't think there is any danger of my falling in love," he said. "At least not in that direction. If I can win her love, though, I shall do so, as she is worth the trouble for herself alone."

"Well, you must tell me everything she says and does in regard to Bertrand. I don't care anything about your love-making."

"Of course, of course!" said the gambler, as he turned to leave the office.

## CHAPTER XI.

### BERTRAND IS DEAD.

A month passed, during which time Marcellus Caswell called on Carrie Sedgwick twice a week. He had become a regular caller, and a mutual interest had made them apparently the best of friends.

During that time he had received \$2,000 from Leech, for which he had given his notes for double the amount. Of course, the transaction was unlawful, but the wily old lawyer well knew that under the circumstances the money would pass through his hands before it reached Marcellus Caswell's fingers.

The gambler was more and more determined to win Carrie. She had won him far more than he had won her, but he was blissfully unconscious of that fact.

While both had designs, each was unconscious of the other's intentions—did not suspect each other's motives.

Thus matters stood when the half brother suddenly suspected that the old lawyer was trying to hold him off till he had loaned money enough at two to one to cover his share of the estate.

"Oh, I'll get a body and send it up at once," he said, "and put a stop to that game. He already holds my notes for \$10,000, of which sum I have had but half. I've been wasting too much time on the girl in the case. When I get the fortune she will be an easy capture."

Two days later he burst into the old lawyer's private office, and nearly paralyzed him with the information that he



had sent a body securely packed in a barrel up to the mad-house.

"And the stiff looks very much like Bertrand, too," he added.

"Great Scott!" gasped Leech, "what have you done?"

"Why, just what was understood between us that I should do," replied Marcellus.

"Why didn't you see me before you did so?"

"Because I had no time to do so. The matter had to be attended to at once. They understood me to be a young doctor in quest of a subject. Oh, I managed the thing all right, and nobody can have any suspicion whatever in regard to it."

Leech was mad as a hornet.

It was cutting off a revenue of at least \$5,000 a month, for Marcellus had borrowed that much in the first month of their conspiracy.

"You have done wrong," he said. "You should have come to me before taking that step."

"You did not tell me to do so," returned Marcellus, "so it's too late now."

"Yes, too late!" growled Leech. "It serves me just right for dealing with a fool."

"See here, old man, we are in the same boat and on a perfect equality. But for the interest that binds us together I'd knock you down for that remark. You want to keep a civil tongue in your head or else an iron pot over it."

"I beg pardon. I was angry," said the lawyer.

"You have no right to get angry. I have only done what we agreed to do. The barrel has gone up to the asylum. You will get the telegram to-day, probably, announcing the sudden death of Bertrand."

"Yes, yes, let it go," and the lawyer turned to look over some papers on the desk before him.

In the afternoon a dispatch was received from Dr. Crabbe:

"To J. Marley Leech, No. — Nassau St., N. Y.

"Bertrand Caswell died last night without recovering his reason. Autopsy to be held to-day.

"J. D. Crabbe, M. D."

Giving the telegram to Marcellus to show to his friends and Bertrand's acquaintances, Leech at once set out to visit the asylum, to look after the funeral of the young man.

That evening Marcellus called on Carrie Sedgwick with the dispatch in his pocket.

"I have bad news for you, Miss Sedgwick," he said, as she came into the parlor.

She turned pale, and caught the back of a chair for support.

"What is it?" she hoarsely whispered.

"Bertrand is dead."

A shriek burst from her lips, and she fell to the floor like one dead.

He sprang forward and took her in his arms and laid her on a sofa.

The others in the house came running in in the greatest alarm.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" chorused a score of excited men and women.

A physician was summoned, and while they were waiting for him the telegram was shown.

They were all shocked, and every one had a kind word to say for the poor, unfortunate young man.

When Carrie came to her moans were heartrending to hear.

She did not say anything for many hours. She simply sobbed and moaned and wrung her hands like one in great mental agony.

The doctor ordered perfect quiet and rest as the best for her, and then administered an opiate.

Under the influence of the opiate she slept till morning, but her mother said she moaned all night in her sleep.

The next morning brain fever had set in, and the doctor was hastily sent for again.

"It's a bad case," said the doctor, shaking his head. "I have feared this all along."

By noon she was out of her head. She called for Bertrand all the time in her delirium.

When she came to three weeks had passed, and she lay in bed a perfect wreck of her former self.

All her strength was gone.

She was as weak as an infant, and could only speak in the weakest whisper.

Yet she asked for Bertrand.

"You must not try to talk now," said the doctor. "You have been very ill, and are too weak to talk."

She could but obey, and her convalescence slowly followed.

Gradually she regained her health and strength, but her heart seemed to be dead.

She simply lived because she did not die, and her friends noticed that she took no interest in anything whatever.

The doctor suggested that her friends in the house take some steps toward trying to amuse her.

Nearly every day Marcellus Caswell sent her a costly bouquet of flowers.

They were the only things she seemed to take any notice of.

One day she asked where the flowers came from.

"Mr. Caswell sent them to you," said her mother.

"Does he live?"

"Marcellus lives," said her mother.

She sank back into the easy-chair with a sigh and closed her eyes wearily, as if she fain would sleep and never wake again.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GAMBLER AND THE MAIDEN.

Let us go back to the day the telegram announcing the death of Bertrand Caswell was received, and note the events that immediately followed that announcement.

It was given to the press, and in a day or two all Bertrand's friends and acquaintances had heard that he was dead.

It was also announced that the half-brother, who had been cut off in his father's will, had fallen heir to the Caswell estate.

That immediately caused a flood of congratulations to fall upon Marcellus Caswell.

The latter had the respect for public opinion that caused him to go up to the madhouse to attend the private funeral of his unfortunate half-brother.

The body which had been prepared to represent Bertrand's was certified to by Dr. Crabbe and two assistants, and the cause of death was given as "heart disease."

The obsequies were private, and three days later the lawyer and gambler returned to the city, and steps were taken to turn the estate over to the heir.

Leech and the young gambler were closeted together for nearly a week, looking over the papers pertaining to the estate.

Marcellus was astonished at the smallness of the sum that was to fall to him.

The estate being valued at \$250,000, he naturally expected that at least half of that amount would be turned over to him.

"Crabbe is to have \$200 per month as long as Bertrand remains in his charge," said Leech.



"Yes, that's all right," said Marcellus. "I'll pay \$100 per month and you'll do the same."

"It is the interest on \$48,000 at five per cent," remarked the lawyer, "which sum must be set aside for that purpose before the division is made."

"The deuce you say!"

"Yes. How else is it to be provided for?"

"Why, you pay half and I'll pay the other half."

"That's all very well; but if you should die or lose your money at gambling I'd have all to pay. Business is business, young man."

"See here, old man!" cried Marcellus hotly, "I won't consent for \$24,000 to be taken out of my share. With what I owe you that would be \$34,000."

"Yes, that's the exact sum. You forget that I hold the trump card in this thing. I don't propose to leave the matter in such shape that the whole burden would be liable to fall on me."

Marcellus was forced to submit, and at the end of about three weeks the old lawyer turned over half of the estate to him, minus the \$24,000 and the amount of the notes he held, and received a receipt for the whole amount.

That matter settled, Marcellus Caswell began to live in a style becoming a man of fortune.

He had the good sense to keep away from the gamblers who had hitherto been his boon companions, and endeavored to create the impression on the minds of all that he was a reformed man.

Every day he sent a costly bouquet to Carrie Sedgwick, and sent messengers to inquire as to her condition.

About two months after he came into possession of his portion of the unlawful division of the estate he received permission to call on her.

She was very pale and sad-looking, and received him in the presence of her mother and a lady friend.

"I am rejoiced at seeing you again," he said, bowing with all the deference due a queen. "You have been very ill indeed, but I hope your health in the future may be better than ever in the past."

"I thank you very much for your kind wishes," she replied, giving him her hand. "I don't think I can ever be well again."

"Oh, don't say that. You are too young to have such gloomy feelings. When you get stronger you should travel, and see some of the bright world."

"My heart is broken. My life is under a shadow which can never leave me in this life. What have I to live for now?"

"That cloud is only in your imagination. Your friends believe in your innocence, and stand ready to vindicate you on every occasion. The court will so declare, and that should satisfy any reasonable mind."

"You forget, Mr. Caswell, that I know nothing about the occurrences of that night myself previous to the moment I was startled out of my sleep. It is now impossible for me to find out."

"That may all be true, and yet furnish no reason why you should not be your old self again."

They conversed quite awhile, and then she asked for the particulars of Bertrand's death and burial. He gave them to her very minutely—all false, of course—and she listened with a sad heart.

"I am going to have a splendid monument put up over his grave," he added, "and set aside a sum to keep it in repair forever."

"That is so kind of you."

"It is a duty which I could not neglect under any circumstances."

He went away with a permission from her to renew his visits.

"I'll win her yet," he said, "and if she'll have me I'll marry her."

Three days later he sent her a note, asking her to ride with him in the park.

She consented, under the advice of her mother, and he came with a splendid turnout.

The drive did her more good than all the medicine she had taken during her convalescence.

A faint blush came to her pale cheeks, and a brightness beamed in her eyes that had not been there since the night she was stricken down. And at times she smiled at his trifling witticisms.

When he returned her to her mother, the latter remarked:

"Why, the ride did her a world of good, Mr. Caswell!"

"Yes, so I think. Perhaps she had better dismiss her physician and call me in. I would soon have the roses in her cheeks again."

When he returned to his hotel, after leaving his team at the stable, he found a telegram awaiting him.

He tore it open and hastily read it.

He staggered like one stricken a terrible blow between the eyes.

"Come to my office at once," the telegram read. "He has escaped from custody and is at large."

"(Signed.)"

"Leech."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ESCAPE FROM THE MADHOUSE.

Let us return to the victim of the madhouse.

After Bertrand had been there a fortnight he began to grow restless, made so by the confinement he was subjected to.

He asked repeatedly to have Carrie sent to him, and was as often put off with an excuse by the assistant keeper in charge of him.

One day he was startled by loud wails, in a woman's voice, coming from an adjoining room.

An insane woman had been in there for two years.

About once a month her bad spells came upon her, during which she shrieked and wailed incessantly.

Bertrand imagined that the cries came from Carrie, whom he looked upon as his guardian angel.

The thought that she was crying and wailing that way seemed to wake him up to a wonderful degree.

He flew around the room in a vain effort to get out.

Pounding on the door with all his might, he cried out:

"Help! Help! Help!"

The keepers were used to all sorts of insane vagaries, and therefore paid no attention to them.

As long as the patients could not get out of their rooms they did not care how much they howled.

The failure to respond to his calls angered him. He flew into a terrible rage, and called loudly:

"Carrie! Carrie! I am here! I will come to you as soon as I can get out."

Of the other cries in the house he seemed to pay no attention whatever.

Only that one voice seemed to move him. He would call out:

"Where are you? What's the matter?"

Of course he could get no answer to his queries, and so he remained in a state of terrible agitation.

When the assistant came in with his meal, Bertrand turned fiercely upon him, and demanded:



"What are they doing to Carrie? I have been listening to her shrieks all day."

"You are mistaken. It is not Carrie you heard. It was Louise's voice in the next room."

"No, it was Carrie's voice. I know it too well. What's the matter with her?"

"It was not Carrie's voice."

"I say it was! There—she is screaming again! Let me go to her!"

He made a dash for the half-opened door.

The stalwart assistant caught him by the collar and hurled him back against the wall, saying:

"Keep quiet, now. That is Louise's voice you hear. Carrie is not here at all. She will come for you in a few days."

"Why tell me that when I know her voice?"

"Don't you know that in this country people never lie? Come with me, now, and I'll show you who it is you hear," and he led him out of the room into the corridor.

Unlocking the door of the next room, he showed him the tall, gaunt form of the raving maniac whose screams had so much disturbed him.

She was forty years old, and gray.

"No, no!" he cried, recoiling from the room, "she is not Carrie! I am so glad she is not!"

"You will believe me next time, will you not?" the keeper asked:

"Yes, yes!" and he started to return to his own room again.

Once more in his own room, he threw himself upon the bed and burst into tears, the first he had shed since being confined there.

After that he paid no more attention to the cries of the maniac in the next room.

But they annoyed him all the same, and he began to grow extremely nervous.

In a few days the mad spell left the woman, and her cries ceased. Peace and quiet once more reigned throughout the house.

A month passed and the victim was still more restless and nervous.

The close confinement was telling on him, and, as he looked through the bars of the window of his room to the clear sky beyond, an irrepressible longing to bask in the sunshine took possession of him.

By and by the mad spell came upon the lunatic in the next room again, and her screams once more responded through the house.

One night Dr. Crabbe came into his room to talk to him.

A summer thunder storm was brewing at the time.

Incessant peals of thunder and vivid flashes of lightning interrupted the conversation to a marked degree.

Suddenly there came a flash and clap that shook the building from end to end.

The doctor turned pale.

A cry arose from one end of the house to the other, and the stentorian voice of one of the keepers was heard crying:

"Fire! Fire!"

The doctor darted out of the room and flew along the corridor at the top of his speed.

He left the door of Bertrand's room ajar.

The young man stood still in the center of the room a moment or two, gazing at the door.

Suddenly he picked up his hat, which had been lying on the little table ever since he was brought there, placed it on his head and marched out of the room.

Instead of following the doctor, he went in the opposite

direction. In another moment he found himself on the piazza at the south side of the house.

The rain was coming down in torrents, vivid flashes of lightning illuminated the scene, and the continuous roar of thunder deadened every other sound.

It was the first breath of fresh air he had inhaled for over two months. New life seemed to seize upon him with the fresh air, and away he dashed out into the rain.

Strange, he did not take to the road, as any one else would have done. He did not seem to think of that.

Right ahead of him was a patch of woods that the lightning revealed to him every moment or two. He made directly for the forest, but in a couple of minutes he struck the iron fence that inclosed the grounds.

It was not believed that any human being could scale the railing, for the iron bars were nine feet high, and had sharpened points at the top.

Yet he boldly proceeded to scale them.

In just two minutes he dropped to the ground on the other side, unhurt and as free as a bird.

Just how he managed to get over the spiked points of the iron bars passes understanding. But he did so, and made off through the woods without having any objective point in view.

By and by the rain ceased, and the stars came out again. Yet he made his way steadily through the forest until he came out upon a small road running east and west.

He turned eastward and walked with a joyous step. It had been so long since he had been allowed the pleasure of a tramp that he indulged in walking to his heart's content.

An hour's walk brought him to another road leading north, and he turned in that direction.

When morning came, he had walked some thirty miles. He was very tired, yet the relief from confinement was so great that he scarcely felt the fatigue of the long walk.

The sun rose bright and clear, and in a couple of hours more had dried his clothes.

It was nearly noon when he stopped by a well at the roadside to get a drink of water, which a comely, middle aged woman was drawing from the depths below.

"Will you give me a drink of water?" he asked in such a respectful tone that the woman answered:

"Yes, sir; for you look very tired. Have you walked very far?"

"Yes, very far," and he eagerly took the dipper of clear, cold water that she handed him and drained it of its contents.

"Can I have another drink?" he asked.

"Yes, of course. Water is both free and plentiful in this country," and she gave him another dipperful of water:

He drank it eagerly, and then, as he wiped the perspiration from his brow, he said:

"You are very kind to me, and I thank you very much."

"Won't you go into the house, sir, and rest a bit and have something to eat?"

She asked him in a very kindly way, and he answered:

"Thanks, if you please."

She took the bucket to carry it to the house. He stepped forward and took it from her hand and carried it while she led the way.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

The woman showed him where to place the bucket of water, and he put it down where it had been kept for years.



Then he looked around the cosy room, saw an easy chair near the window, and, half staggering forward, dropped into it with a sigh of relief.

"Poor man!" thought the woman, as she gazed at him. "He must be very tired from his long walk."

Then, like the sensible woman she was, she hastened to get him something to eat. In the cupboard were plenty of cold meats, pies, bread, butter, milk, and other good things, which she set out on the table.

"Come and eat something, and you can rest better," she said kindly.

Something about him had won her good will the moment she had heard his voice out by the well. So kindly did she speak to him that he looked up at her, and said:

"You are one of the good angels," and then sat down to the table to eat what had been set before him.

She sat opposite him as he ate, and studied his features.

"Where do you live?" she asked.

"Nowhere," he said. "I have no home, but I am looking for one."

"Oh, you are looking for employment, are you?"

"Yes," he answered, scarcely understanding her question.

"Do you know anything about farm work?"

"No, not a thing."

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know."

She was surprised.

She was puzzled.

"You haven't done anything wrong, have you?" she finally asked.

"No."

He looked her full in the face with an honest frankness as he answered her questions, that completely gained her good will.

But there was a wearied look about him that touched her heart, and she resolved to give him food and lodging until the next day.

"You can stay here and rest yourself until to-morrow, if you wish," she said; "for I know you must be tired."

"Thanks. I am very tired, indeed. You angels are very kind."

She thought the word angel a strange appellation for her—a buxom widow of five-and-thirty years of age.

After eating, she showed him a room where he could lie down on a bed and rest, for which he again thanked her.

Being left alone, he threw himself upon the bed, and in a few minutes was in a deep sleep.

When supper was ready in the evening the widow sent her little boy into the room to call him.

The boy soon returned to tell his mother that he could not wake him up.

"Poor man!" she said. "He must be wearied out. I'll put his supper aside for him and let him sleep as long as he wants to."

She put aside a bountiful supper for him, and then waited until bedtime for him to appear.

But he did not leave the room that night, and she decided not to disturb him.

The next morning she sent her little son into the room to call him for breakfast.

Five minutes later the boy came back, and said:

"Mamma, he is lying there muttering something I can't understand, and he don't seem to hear me when I call him."

"Dear me! the man must be ill!" exclaimed the widow, now thoroughly alarmed.

Taking her son with her, she went in to see the young stranger.

She found him lying on the bed, undressed and in a fever of delirium.

"Why, he is very ill!" she cried. "He has a burning fever and is completely out of his head. Tell Joe to saddle the roan and ride fast to Dr. Holmes."

The boy hastened to do his mother's bidding, and five minutes from the time the order was given the hired man was riding fast in the direction of the physician, who lived two miles away.

When the doctor came he found our hero raving in the delirium of fever.

"I don't know just what ails him," he said, after watching the patient for some time. "He has a very high fever, and it may be brain fever, and it may not. Who is he?"

The kind hearted widow knew nothing about him, but told the doctor how he came to be in the house.

"You may have him on your hands for a month," remarked the doctor.

"I don't mind that, doctor. I will be responsible for his bill," returned the widow.

"In that case I shall not charge anything," the doctor said. "If you can give him food and lodging, I can give him medical attention."

"Yes—and it won't be the first time that you have done that way, doctor, I know. It would be a pity if we could not do a little good in this world."

"So I think," returned the doctor, who called in the hired man to assist him in putting the patient to bed in the proper way.

Days and weeks passed, and the brave hearted widow nursed the young stranger with true womanly tenderness. He continued delirious, but at last, when reduced to a mere wreck, he recovered consciousness.

Oh, how weak he was!

He could not speak above a whisper, nor lift his hands.

"You are better now," said the widow, softly, "but too weak to talk. Don't say a word, but rest until you grow strong again."

He obeyed, following her with his eyes as she moved noiselessly about the room, and gradually grew stronger.

By degrees he learned that he had been very ill, and that the kind hearted widow had nursed him through the attack. A lively sense of gratitude filled his heart, and the memory of Carrie Sedgwick seemed to fade away into a mere shadowy recollection.

One day she assisted him to a big armchair on the piazza, where she seated herself by his side and talked to him by the hour.

To her he seemed to be the most interesting man she had ever met. The fact is, she had learned to love him, though he was totally unaware of the truth. She did not know it herself. She only knew that she was happy whenever she was near him, and never tired of gazing at and talking to him.

By and by he was strong enough to walk out into the orchards and fields, and she accompanied him as often as she could.

"How would you like to live here always?" she asked him one day.

"Very much, indeed," he replied. "It is so quiet, peaceful and pleasant here."

"I am so glad to hear you say that. You can stay here and help me run the farm. You can soon learn all the duties of a good farmer, and you won't have any hard work to do."

After that he seemed to be contented and happy, and so did the widow.



## CHAPTER XV.

## THE CONSPIRATORS AT THE MADHOUSE.

Just as soon as he could get to the office of the old Nassau street lawyer Marcellus Caswell burst in upon him.

"What in everlasting horror does this mean?" he demanded, shaking the telegram at him.

"It means that Bertrand Caswell has escaped from Crabbe's madhouse," said Leech, looking up at the young gambler.

"Ten thousand furies! Why did they let him get away? Somebody ought to be shot for criminal carelessness!"

"Hush! Don't talk so loud, or you may be overheard. We have got to move very cautiously now, or the consequences will be awful!"

Both were pale and nervous.

Leech shut the door of the little private office and then dropped into a chair.

"All of this comes from your impatience, and rushing the thing through so hastily," said the lawyer.

"Not so," returned Marcellus. "It all comes from Crabbe's not doing what he was paid to do. I'll bet it's a dodge to blackmail us out of a round sum of money. Bertrand is not in such a condition of mental activity as to warrant the belief that he could make his escape from such a strong building as that madhouse."

"By my soul!" exclaimed the lawyer, springing to his feet. "I believe you are right. I will go up there and see about it at once."

"Yes—we'll both go. We'll see every room in the house, or I'll blow out the brains of the villainous old Crabbe!"

"You must do nothing that will get the affair into the papers," continued the lawyer. "We can't employ detectives, for that would betray our secret. Once the secret is known to the parties who are criminal with us, we will be bled to the last dollar we have. We must go up and see about it."

They left the office together and, taking a carriage, drove out of the city in the direction of the madhouse.

On reaching there they left the carriage down at the gate, two hundred yards from the house, and rang the bell for admittance to the grounds.

Dr. Crabbe was waiting for the old lawyer, and sent a man down to let them in.

Not a word was spoken until they were locked up in the madhouse doctor's private office.

Then Leech turned to him and asked:

"How did it happen?"

It was soon explained.

"During the terrible storm of Thursday night I was in his room for a few minutes," said the doctor. "A thunder-bolt came and struck the large oak near the north side of the house. The building shook to such an extent that I became alarmed, and every inmate screamed and yelled in terror. Thinking the house had been struck, I dashed out of the room without locking the door."

"Ah!" ejaculated the old lawyer.

"When I went back to his room he was gone, and——"

"Yes, of course," sarcastically.

"But I was not troubled about that, as I knew he could not get out of the park with its iron railing inclosure. I will give either of you one thousand dollars if you can get over the fence. We took lanterns and searched the grounds for him, failing to find him. But we knew how easily one could dodge a light in the dark, and did not think anything wrong about our failure to find him. How he could get out of the inclosure puzzles me. I telegraphed you after I was quite sure he had given us the slip."

"It's certain, then, that he's gotten away?" asked Leech.

"There's no doubt of that," returned Crabbe.

"Have you sent men in search of him?"

"Yes—two men who knew him by sight, and they have been instructed not to say that any one had escaped from this place."

"But have you not heard from them?"

"No, not yet."

"It's a pretty kettle of fish," remarked Marcellus, petulantly.

"It can't be helped. It was the result of a combination of circumstances over which one could not exercise any control."

"But where will it end? If he reaches the city and is recognized, the funeral business will be investigated and the snap given away," said Marcellus.

"Yes, that's so," added Leech.

"We must catch him," replied Crabbe.

"But you haven't caught him."

"We are trying to, though."

"There's no use crying over it," remarked Leech. "The thing for us to do is to catch him before he reaches the city. He is not able to give any account of himself, is he, doctor?"

"No. No one could make him out unless he knew him personally."

"Then we must put detectives after him, and——"

"Oh, that won't do!" exclaimed Leech, interrupting him. "If any detective gets hold of the thing we'll never hear the last of it, and we'll be bled to death."

"Yes, that's true," remarked Crabbe. "It won't do to have any outside parties in the case."

"Then I'll turn detective myself," said Marcellus, in a very determined tone. "if I can get up any kind of a disguise."

"I can disguise you easy enough," said Dr. Crabbe.

"Do so, then, and I will scour the country round about here for him."

Dr. Crabbe took him into another room and began to work on him.

In half an hour he had him so well disguised that Leech did not recognize him when he re-entered the room.

He looked like some country swain of about ten years less than his real age.

"Now, doctor," said Marcellus, "I want to ask you about your opinion as to how to get out of this inclosure. How do you think he managed it?"

"That is the most complex puzzle of this whole affair. Come with me, and we will go around the entire length of the iron railing, and if you can find a spot where you can climb over it I will give you one thousand dollars."

They went all around the little park and closely inspected every foot of the fence without finding any spot where they thought any one could scale it.

"Are you really sure that he has left the park?" Leech asked.

"Yes—quite sure," was the reply.

"Then there is a mystery about this thing which ought to be unraveled."

"What is that?"

"Ah! If I knew I would tell you. I suspect that he passed out through yonder gate."

"Yes—through the gate. It was unlocked for him and then closed again."

"Oh, I'll stake my head on the fidelity of my two assistants," said the doctor.

"I wouldn't stake my head on any man's fidelity," remarked Marcellus.

"Nor would I ordinarily," returned the madhouse keeper.



"But those two men are mine, body and soul. Treachery to me on their part means death to them."

"Eh!"

"A word from me," hoarsely whispered the doctor, "would quickly slip a halter around their necks. You see I know my men."

Leech and the young gambler shuddered.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE VAIN SEARCH FOR THE VICTIM.

After seeing the half-brother so well disguised and on the lookout for the escaped victim, the old lawyer bade adieu to him and went back to the city. He was to keep up a sharp lookout for Bertrand in New York.

A week passed and the case remained as deep a mystery as ever.

Nothing had been seen or heard of him.

They dared not let the press get hold of the matter for fear of the consequences; hence, nobody knew that anyone had escaped from the madhouse. In fact, had anyone asked the question of any of the madhouse people they would, one and all, have declared that nobody had escaped from them.

Marcellus ran down to the city to see the lawyer.

He found him in his office looking ten years older than when he saw him last.

The suspense of the past week had told on him at a fearful rate.

"What news?" the old lawyer asked, the moment the young man entered the office.

"None. Have you?"

"Not a word."

"I can't find any traces of him anywhere."

"Singular that nobody else has."

"Yes, very singular. If I find him we won't have any further trouble with him."

The old lawyer looked at him and shuddered.

But he said nothing.

The half-brother was betraying a recklessness of spirit that made his blood run cold at times.

He had bitterly repented that he had ever entered into the conspiracy with him.

But he was in for it now, and his only recourse was to face the peril boldly.

"I think he is dead," said Marcellus.

Leech sprang to his feet and exclaimed:

"I would to Heaven he was!"

"So do I," said Marcellus, "for then we would have no further trouble."

"Yes. Why do you think he is dead?"

"Because if he lived and went wandering about the country he would have been taken up as a lunatic, and the case would have been in the papers."

"It would seem so."

"Of course. The river is not very far from the madhouse. If he got out of the park that night and wandered in the direction of the river, he fell in and that's the last of him. Dr. Crabbe takes the same view of it that I do."

"Well, what does Crabbe say about his compensation?"

"Nothing. I don't think he expects another dollar unless Bertrand returns."

"Then I hope he will return."

"So do I to the tune of \$24,000."

"Yes, a good sum of money."

"Well, what are we to do now?"

"I don't know, unless it is to wait and see what will turn up. I would feel much better if I knew that he was dead."

"Ah, wouldn't I, though!"

"Yes, I suppose so. I think you had better keep around the neighborhood for another week and be on hand if he is found."

He went back up to the vicinity of the madhouse again, and spent another week hunting around in search of traces of the missing man.

He visited every farmhouse for miles around, and asked, in a way not to excite suspicion, if such a person had been seen in the vicinity.

Of course, no one had, and gradually the impression that he had been swallowed up in the Hudson became fixed in his mind.

He went back to the city, and held another long interview with old Leech.

Marcellus wanted the \$24,000 which he had put up to take care of Bertrand as long as he lived at the madhouse returned to him.

"Not yet," said the old man. "When we fail to hear from him for a year and a day then we take down the whole pile and divide it, but not before."

"But what's the use of waiting so long?"

"For safety. We don't know at what hour he may turn up."

"I think he is dead."

"But your thinking so has nothing to do with it."

Marcellus knew that the old lawyer was right, and so he dropped the subject.

A few days later he was again seen in his old haunts, as though nothing had occurred to disturb the even tenor of his thoughts.

He continued to call on Carrie Sedgwick, who received him as a sort of missing link between her and Bertrand, whose death had cast a shadow over her life that would never pass away.

The time set for her trial under the indictment came, and she again became so nervous that her physician feared that she would have another attack of brain fever.

To the surprise of everybody, however, the prosecution asked for a postponement of the case, and, as the defense made no opposition, the case was put off to the next term of the court.

"That means that it will never come up again, save to be dismissed," said her lawyer.

"But it still leaves me under a cloud of suspicion," she replied.

"There is no suspicion in the public mind," he remarked.

"I do not agree with you. Women are very jealous of each other, and many will remark the fact that an indictment for attempting to kill is hanging over me."

"I think you are morbidly sensitive on that point," said her counsel. "Not one of your friends believe you guilty."

"My friends are loyal, but my enemies I fear," she returned. "I wish the trial could come off once for all and end the suspense I suffer."

"Don't worry over it, my dear Miss Sedgwick. There's no use in doing so. It is bound to end in your vindication whenever it comes."

She had to submit to the disposition that was made of the case, and so she returned home to grieve and wait several months.

At the end of the time which the prosecution had asked for the case was called up again, and her counsel opposed any further postponement.

The prosecution then declared that, owing to lack of any



once other than circumstantial, they were compelled to to a dismissal of the case.

Her friends were glad for her sake, but Carrie burst into tears when she heard it.

"I am not vindicated," she said. "My enemies can say things now which no one having knowledge of the case could deny, and it would reflect on me. Oh, it is hard to bear!"

Notwithstanding her view of the case, all her friends were gratified over the fact that she would not have to go through the ordeal of a searching cross-examination in a crowded courtroom.

Marcellus came to congratulate her, and said:

"Your friends are all loyal, and none more so than myself. When a case is dismissed from court it means a complete vindication of the innocence of the accused. Do you know there are several young gentlemen who desire to see you?"

She opened wide her eyes and asked:

"Why, what for?"

"For your heart and hand."

A look of pain came into her face.

"And I wish to enter suit right here and now," he added, taking her hand in his. "I have loved you since the day I met you on the stairs in Mr. Leech's office. Will you be my wife, Carrie?"

She paled and trembled, but spoke out frankly:

"No—it cannot be. My heart is ashes. I cannot love," and she buried her face in her hands.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A HEART OF HEARTS.

Marcellus Caswell was dumfounded at his rejection by Carrie Sedgwick. He had always believed himself irresistible in Cupid's war, and this was the first time in his career where his lovemaking had been checked.

He had grown to love her as much as his corrupt and vicious nature could love, and the rejection of his suit broke him all up.

Just how he left the house he did not know. He was in a dazed sort of condition, and scarcely knew where he was going or what he was doing, when he met some of his old whilom boon companions.

They were extra cordial in their greeting, for now he was a rich man of leisure.

"Old man," said one of them, grasping his hand, "you look all broke up. What's the matter with you?"

"I'm the worst broken up man you ever saw," he said. "I want something to brace me up on. Come on—let's have something."

That was the usual way, and they went the usual way into a clubhouse, where a couple of bottles of wine were soon emptied.

Under the influence of the potations Marcellus told his companions that he had just been "sacked" by his girl.

They laughed heartily.

"Is that what breaks you up, old man?" one of them asked.

"Yes—that and nothing more."

"Why, the town is full of girls who would be glad to have pity on you. Just look around for another, old fellow."

"No, it's she or none."

"Oh, you are gone on her, then?"

"Yes."

"Well, try her again. Women often change their minds, you know."

He drank till he was more drunk than he had been for months, and the result was a visit to the gaming table.

When he came away at a very late hour he had lost over one thousand dollars, for which he gave his check on his banker.

The next morning he felt worse than ever.

The gamblers who had fleeced him the night before kept near him that he might not get away from them.

They were determined to stick to him as long as he had a dollar in the bank. After they got his last cent they would drop him like a squeezed lemon, and seek some other victim.

A week later he called on Carrie again.

She sent down word that he would have to excuse her, as she was indisposed that evening.

He asked for Mrs. Sedgwick, to whom he poured out the story of his love for Carrie, begging her to use her influence to induce her daughter to listen to his suit.

Mrs. Sedgwick was surprised, as Carrie had not told her of his proposal.

"But you are not exactly the man a sensible girl would confide her happiness to, Mr. Caswell," said the widow, very promptly. "You are known as a very fast young man about town, who drinks, gambles, and lives above his income. Poverty and ruin are sure to follow in the wake of such a career."

"I own to all the charges," he said with a frankness that impressed the widow. "But I have never loved till now. I have turned over a new leaf, and am willing to serve any term of probation she may impose upon me. Jacob served fourteen years for Rachel. My love for Carrie is no less than Jacob's love for Rachel. If I do not serve as faithfully as he did she can dismiss me as unworthy."

Mrs. Sedgwick was so impressed by what he said that she went to her daughter's room and repeated his words to her, saying:

"If I were you, Carrie, I'd put him to the test of a year's good behavior, and then marry him if he stood the test."

"Even though you did not love him, mother?"

"Could you not love him?"

"No, mother. It would be impossible."

"Then I shall tell him there is no hope for him whatever?"

"Yes. Tell him that."

She did so, and he went away, more than ever in love with the prize that was beyond his reach.

"I'll make her mine yet!" he hissed, as he wended his way back to the hotel where he resided. "I swear it, and the siege begins from this night."

That night he went to bed without taking his usual drink.

When he arose in the morning he had resolved to make his life a living lie, in order to deceive her and make her believe that it was all for love of her.

"I'll drink no more, play no more," he said to himself, "but will attend her church regularly, go to the Sunday-school, prayer-meetings, festivals, fairs, and other church doings, and become a model young man. If that fails, I try other means. She shall be mine at every hazard."

Time passed, and old Lawyer Leech was surprised at the steady gait of the young man. He had kept his eyes on him all the time, knowing that at any moment Bertrand might be found somewhere in the wide, wide world.

But the secret, private life of the young man was one of debauchery and licentiousness, which fact was known to but few boon companions.

By degrees he became known as a regular attendant at the church to which Carrie and her mother belonged.

He was welcomed by the pastor and prominent members



of the church and Sunday-school, and one day at the library he was introduced to Carrie.

"Oh, we are already acquainted," said Carrie, extending her hand to him. "I am glad to see you, Mr. Caswell."

He bowed low over her hand, and said in low tones:

"I hope you have entirely recovered your health, Miss Sedgwick."

"Thanks. I am much stronger than when I saw you last."

"I am so glad to hear that."

"You have become quite interested in church matters of late?" she remarked.

"Yes. I have to do something to draw me away from the sphere I had been living in so long, and so I came here. I have had a hard fight of it, but I think I have won."

"It will be much easier for you after you have been in it a year or two," she said.

"Oh, yes; when it becomes a habit."

Thus they were brought together again, in a casual way, and were soon on a pleasant footing once more.

But neither of them spoke of the past—she from choice, and he as a matter of policy.

A year passed, and still they met two or three times a week at the church gatherings. A score of young women tried to lure him to their side with smiles and little feminine attentions. But he would turn to Carrie, leaving all the others, whenever opportunity occurred to put him in her proximity.

At last he began courting again, and she permitted him to call on her at her home.

She had grown more cheerful and took more pleasure in life.

By and by he proposed again.

She turned to him frankly and said:

"I do not love you. I am afraid I can never love. My heart must be dead. But I like you as a friend very much. Let us wait another year, and see if love can take root in my heart."

"My devotion to your happiness will produce love," he pleaded. "A husband's tender love and devotion cannot fail to win the wife's heart."

"That is a beautiful theory," she said, gravely, "but if it should not prove correct in our case our lives would be wrecked. I will never wed where I do not love. Let us wait a year. If I can love you, and I shall try to, I will tell you so and marry you. If I cannot love you I could not be your wife."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### "BERTRAND IS ALIVE!"

Let us now return to Bertrand, whom we left at a farmhouse up the river, some sixty or seventy miles above New York City.

The Widow Greene was considered well-fixed, in a financial sense, and her farm was a very productive one for that locality.

Her barns were always full, and the cattle on the place sleek and fat.

A number of farmers' sons in her vicinity had tried to get into the deceased Greene's shoes, but in vain.

She had decided to run the farm herself for a while, and her management showed that she knew how to do it as well as any farmer in the county.

We left our hero at her place recovering from the severe illness that fell upon him the day he reached there.

He had recovered sufficiently to walk about the farm and enjoy the quiet life of the place when we last saw him.

One day he went out with the hired men, and worked them all day long, coming home in the evening very fatigued.

"Oh, you'll make yourself ill again," the widow exclaimed.

"I don't think I will," he said, as he dropped into a chair and wiped the perspiration from his brow. "It will give me the exercise I need, and I like it."

"You do? I am so glad to hear that," she said.

That night he ate heartily and went to bed early, slept soundly, and was up with the lark ready for work again, feeling better than he had felt for some time.

It was real enjoyment to him, and at the end of the week he was as brown as a berry, and could do as much work as any man on the place.

He could chat and laugh as merrily as any of them, only the past was a blank to him.

When asked his name, when he was recovering from his illness, he had said simply: "Bert," which was the name his chums called him by. The widow misunderstood him, and called him ever after "Mr. Burt."

By that name he was known to the farmhands, and all the country people around him with whom he came in contact.

The widow made such a pet of him that the farmhands undertook to chaff him. But his look of perfect innocence rebuked them, and they said no more about that to him.

Some of them thought he was a little off in regard to the past, but did not say much about it.

When winter came on the widow paid him the same wages that she paid her hired men, and presented him a fine suit of clothes, overcoat, hat, boots, etc.

He seemed to know but little about the use or value of money. But he put it away and thought no more about it, working faithfully for the sake of being at work.

The long winter passed, and the sun of spring came again.

As the summer waxed warm the people in the crowded city began to flee to the mountains and seaboard.

A number of farmhouses in the vicinity of the Widow Greene took in as many city boarders as they could accommodate.

Farmer Coleman lived about a mile north of the Widow Greene's place.

He had a large farmhouse with room enough for ten boarders.

Among his boarders was Marcellus Caswell, who came up to spend two weeks in the country, fearing that if he went to Saratoga, or any other fashionable watering-place, he would be drawn into some kind of dissipation that Carrie Sedgwick would hear about some day.

He had been there about a week, when one day the Widow Greene drove up in her new and handsome road wagon, with Bertrand seated by her side as an escort.

A gay party, Marcellus among them, was seated on the lawn under the shade of the trees in front of the house.

Bertrand sprang to the ground and assisted the widow to alight. Then he hitched the horses and escorted the widow toward the house.

The moment he laid eyes on Bertrand Marcellus turned ashen-hued in the face. His knees smote together, and he leaned against a tree for support.

Bertrand was as brown as a berry, and better-looking than ever before in all his life.

A number of ladies in the party remarked the handsome face and figure of the countryman as he escorted the widow to the house, where Farmer Coleman and his wife welcomed them.

"Just look at Mr. Caswell," said one young lady, pointing toward Marcellus, as he leaned limp and ashen-hued against the tree.



"Why, what's the matter Caswell?" one of the gentleman asked, going forward. "Are you ill?"

"Yes—a sudden attack," he said. "It will soon pass away."

He sat down at the root of the tree and gradually recovered himself.

Bertrand was alive!

That fact went thundering through his soul.

He could think of nothing else, could hear nothing else.

Bertrand was alive!

The world seemed to be whirling around with him, threatening every moment to throw him off at a tangent into illimitable space.

Bertrand was alive!

He rose to his feet and staggered toward the house more like a drunken man than the sober individual he had been for months.

Entering the house, he climbed the stairs to his room, where he threw himself on his bed.

Bertrand was alive!

More than a year had passed. The money set aside to pay for his keeping at Dr. Crabbe's madhouse had been divided between Marcellus and Lawyer Leech.

But now Bertrand was alive and healthy-looking.

At the supper table that evening he heard the Widow Green and the handsome "Mr. Burt" spoken of by the boarders.

"She is trying to capture him for a second husband," said Mrs. Coleman, who was something of a gossip.

The next day young Caswell paid another week's board in advance, and said:

"I am going to the city on business, but will return in a day or two."

That evening he was driven to the depot four miles away, where he took the train.

The next day he burst into Leech's office, and gasped out:

"Bertrand is alive! I've seen him!"

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE CONSPIRATORS FRIGHTENED

Had a dynamite bomb exploded under the building, sending him skyward, old Leech could not have been more astounded than he was when Marcellus Caswell blurted out:

"Bertrand is alive! I have seen him!"

He sprang to his feet and glared wildly at the young man.

His breath came in gasps, as though he had suddenly been dropped into a tank of ice water.

The expression on the face of the young man added greatly to the old lawyer's terror, who finally dropped back into his seat and glared like a tiger at bay.

Marcellus returned his stare in silence for nearly a minute, and then exclaimed:

"I saw him yesterday, alive and well!"

"Where?" gasped the lawyer.

"About sixty miles up the river at a farmhouse."

"What was he doing?"

"He came to Farmer Coleman's where a party of us had been stopping, in a buggy with Widow Green, at whose house he has been living."

"How did he look?"

"Well, as brown as a berry. They know him there as 'Mr. Burt.'"

"Did you speak to him?"

"No. He did not know me if he saw me, which I doubt. As near as I could learn from the talk among the boarders, who got the cue from Farmer Coleman's wife, he is a sort of favored farmhand on the widow's place. They said she was trying to get him for a second husband."

"Did they say anything about his being crazy?"

"Not a word that I heard. I was so dumfounded when I saw him that I came near fainting dead away on the spot. The boarders thought I had been taken suddenly ill." The old lawyer hung his head and was silent for fully five minutes.

He was thinking harder than ever before in his life. No knotty question of law ever racked his brain so much as the terrible enigma that now confronted him.

"What shall we do?" Marcellus asked, growing impatient.

"What can we do?" the lawyer asked.

"That is for you to say."

"We can't arrest him and take him back to the madhouse without starting an investigation. That would ruin us."

"We can kidnap him!" suggested the young man.

"If we could it would be better; but it won't do to arouse suspicion, as our ruin would be sure to follow."

"Yes, I know that. It would be very difficult to kidnap him and carry him fifty miles without somebody interfering."

"Of course it would, and very dangerous, too."

"Yes," admitted Marcellus. "But we've got to do something. If anybody should recognize him the jig would be up with us."

"We must do something, and right away. Delay is dangerous. It's the most singular freak of insanity I ever heard of. If we had not buried him and published his death in all the papers we could take him back without running any risks."

"Yes, but we've done all that, and now we've got to get him out of the way. He doesn't know one of his old friends, nor anything of the past. Yet, if he is discovered we would have to skip. I am not going to take any chances. Just wait until I see you again," and Marcellus turned to leave the office.

"Hold on! Where are you going?"

"Up the river."

"What are you going to do?"

"Never mind. When I come back we won't have any such danger hanging over our heads as we have now."

The old lawyer turned pale, shuddered, and dropped back into his chair again.



"He is a fiend!" he hissed, as the door closed behind the young man. "Oh, if I had never yielded to his seductive suggestions! He will yet be the death of me. I fear him. In a moment of desperation he would kill his best friend. Will he be my Nemesis?"

While the old lawyer was silent and thoughtful in his office Marcellus was hastening to a costumer's, where he purchased a wig and false beard, which he placed in a small hand bag. Then he started for the depot to take the train for the country farmhouse where he had been spending a week or two.

"It is his life or mine," he muttered, as he threw himself into a seat. "I am not going to be beggared on his account and be sent to prison for what had been done. No, when I go back to New York it will be when the danger that threatens is entirely removed."

He arrived at the farmhouse in the evening, and was welcomed by the entire party of city boarders.

The next day he went out for a stroll in the woods all by himself.

By a strange coincidence he made his way over to the farm of Widow Greene, where he saw the men at work in the field.

He was recognized as one of the city boarders from Coleman's place, and the hired men looked at him with the air of countrymen under such circumstances.

When they stopped work to eat their noonday lunch under the shade of a spreading oak Marcellus joined them, and said he was half tempted to become a farmer himself.

"Guess yer wouldn't be tempted very long, mister," replied one of the men.

"Why not?"

"Too much lively work, and dull times when the work is done."

"Oh, I'd want nothing but papers and books when my work was done," said Marcellus.

The man shook his head, as though he didn't believe that would satisfy him, and said:

"I don't think you could stand the work, mister."

"How do you stand it?"

"Been used to it all my life."

"All of you?"

"No. Burt never worked on a farm until this year."

Marcellus turned to Burt and asked him:

"How do you like it, Mr. Burt?"

"Very much indeed," was the reply. "It agrees with me."

"Are you going to keep at it?"

"Yes."

"For how long?"

"I suppose it will last forever."

The hired men laughed, and one of them said:

"That's what he always says. I told him old age or death would end it some day, and he said that he had died some time ago, and that he was all right."

Marcellus looked at Bertrand, who returned his gaze unflinchingly.

"Oh, I guess he is joking," remarked Marcellus.

"Of course he is," said the other, "for he doesn't look like a man who had died. Why, he can eat as much as the best worker in the field."

The others laughed, and Marcellus said:

"I am charmed with the country, and think of buying a place somewhere up here where I can spend the spring and summer months. If I do, I want to get a good man to take charge of the place and run it for me."

"I'm your man," said one of the party.

"You know all about the business, do you?"

"Yes, from top to bottom and all around," was the reply.

"Would Mr. Burt go with you?"

"No," said Burt.

"Why not?"

"Because I'll stay where I am."

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE VILLAIN AT WORK.

The prompt reply of Bertrand told that he was content to remain where he was.

"Oh, he won't leave the widow," said one of the men. "He can own this farm if he wants to."

"Yes, that's so," and they all laughed again.

Marcellus looked serious.

He gave the sun-browned face of his half brother a searching look for a moment or two, and wondered that the men had not discovered that he was not in his right mind.

"Do you know of a good place for sale up here?" he asked, turning to the men again.

"I guess ther widow would sell if yer offered enough," remarked one of the men.

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes. Go and see her about it."

"I believe I will. Is she at the house?"

"Yes, and as neat as a pin all the time."

"Thank you. I'll go over to the house," and he bowed to the men and turned away, making across the fields in the direction of the farmhouse of the enterprising widow.

He found her at home looking after the churning, which two maids of all work were attending to.

"Madam," he said, taking off his hat and making a profound bow to the widow, "I am one of Farmer Coleman's boarders, and——"

"Please take a seat, sir," she said, interrupting him.

He sat down and continued:

"I have fallen in love with your farm and want to buy, providing you do not ask too much for it."

She looked at him in surprise, and said:

"I have never thought about selling the place, sir. It would take a good sum of money to buy it."

"So I supposed. But still, you would sell it, would you not?"

"I really don't know. I have been here a long time, and I never knew real happiness until I came here as a wife."



"Yes, you are attached to it."

"Yes, very much. I never knew an unhappy moment here till my husband died. I don't think I could be happy anywhere else. Bad luck would follow me if I sold it. I may marry again some day, and live over the old happy days again. No, sir; I couldn't think of selling the old place," and she wiped a pearly tear from her eyes as she spoke.

"Well, I can't blame you for that," said the visitor, "for it certainly is a lovely place. Yet, I am willing to pay even more than its market value for it."

"Don't tempt me that way, please," she said. "I think it would make me miserable for life to do so."

"Then I will not think anything more about it," he said, "for I would not be the cause of your doing a thing you would afterward regret. But do you know of a place that could be bought in this locality? I like this section very much, and would like to have a summer house up here."

"I don't know that any of my neighbors would like to sell. I am content to live all my days out here. Have you spoken to Mr. Coleman on the subject?"

"No, ma'am. I thought I would give them all a surprise by telling them of my purchase of this place."

"Perhaps if you were to speak to him he might be able to find a place that would suit you."

"I don't know of but one place that suits me, and that is yours. I see that all of your neighbors who have any extra rooms have taken city boarders this season."

"Yes. I could have done so, too, as I have some extra room, but I do not care to go to the trouble. I like the quiet comfort of my home too well to have it broken up by a lot of gay people."

"Ah! That quiet comfort is just what I have been looking for," said Marcellus, "and if you will give me room and board in your house you may name your own price. You can inquire of Mr. Coleman's boarders as to my ability to pay. I am wealthy."

"I don't know what to say to that," she replied. "I am averse to taking any boarders at all. If you will call again in a day or two I will give you an answer."

"Thanks. I shall stroll over this way to-morrow afternoon."

He made her a profound bow and took his departure.

The widow was considerably exercised over the offer to buy her farm. But she never once wavered in her determination not to sell.

She made up her mind that if she married, as she secretly hoped to do soon, she could be as happy in the future as in the past. That Mr. Burt would some day ask her to be his wife she did not for a moment doubt. She had her answer ready for him whenever he would ask the question.

That evening everybody on the place knew that the widow had refused to sell her farm at any price.

But the next day Marcellus was at the place again to hear what the widow had to say about his boarding with her for the summer.

The widow had made up her mind that a third party in the house might interfere with her plans in regard to

Mr. Burt, hence she said that she did not think that it would pay her to take any one as a boarder.

"I am sorry to hear you say that," he said.

"I am sorry to have to say it," she replied, "but I have thought it over and made up my mind. The truth is, I am afraid you might persuade me some day to sell the place."

"Oh, is that all? Well, I'll promise not to say another word to you on the subject."

"That won't do any good. I have decided not to take any boarders this summer."

He went away wondering what she was up to, as all her neighbors were eager to fill every room in their houses with as many people as could be crammed into them.

The next day he was in disguise prowling about the farm, watching the men at work, and seeking to make himself acquainted with the habits of Mr. Burt.

One day the men were at work in a part of the field which adjoined a densely wooded piece of land.

The keen, whip-like crack of a rifle was heard, and Bertrand's hat dropped from his head to the ground.

When he picked it up there were two bullet holes in it.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE MYSTERIOUS SHOTS.

"By gum!" exclaimed one of the workmen who saw the bullet holes, "that was a close shave, Burt."

"Yes," said Burt, putting on his hat and resuming his work.

"Who was it?" the others asked.

Of course nobody knew.

But the men were aroused.

They shouldered their hoes and made a dash for the woods to arrest the would-be murderer.

A vigorous search failed to throw any light on the matter.

But the men scoured the woods for half a day without finding any one, and then they returned to their work.

That evening the widow was very much excited over the affair.

But the men were inclined to the belief that the shot was accidental so far as Burt was concerned.

"Don't know but what you are right," said Joe, "but it looks suspicious that the fellow should shoot like that and then run away."

"That is what I am thinking," said the widow. "It looks very suspicious."

Then, turning to Bertrand, she asked:

"Do you know of any one who wants to do you injury, Mr. Burt?"

"No," was the quiet reply.

"You have no enemies?"

"None that I know of."

Two days later the men were seated under a tree eating



their noon lunch, when a shot was heard in the bushes again, and a bullet struck the tree in close proximity to Burt's head.

They sprang to their feet and dashed to the woods at the top of their speed.

They searched everywhere for the would-be murderer, and only caught a glimpse of a man as he fled through the forest.

It was a long chase, and after the whole half day had been wasted, they gave it up and returned to the house.

The widow was now in a fever of terror. She caused the utmost publicity to be given to the affair, and the result was the uprising of the whole neighborhood.

The farmers and their hired men for miles around turned out with guns and dogs to hunt down the would-be assassin.

Even the men who were boarding at Coleman's turned out with them, with Marcellus Caswell at their head, and the hunt was kept up for three days.

The excitement had the tendency to bring the quiet young man, whose life had been imperiled, into great notoriety in the neighborhood.

All the young ladies boarding at the houses up there became interested in him.

They came every day to visit the Widow Greene, and couldn't talk about anything but the young man who had been shot at.

The widow grew somewhat jealous at their attentions, and felt that some of them were actually seeking to win him.

A week later another shot was fired, and the bullet cut a lock of hair from his head.

That fired the entire neighborhood to a pitch of fury.

They all turned out again, and another fruitless search followed.

The widow was now convinced that somebody was determined to kill the man she loved.

That set her wild.

She would not let him go out in the fields again.

"Somebody is trying to kill you," she said.

"But they can't kill me," he replied. "They have tried it three times. I have no fear of being killed."

"But you must not run any risks," she returned.

"I can't stay in the house all the time. I must have exercise."

"Just stay in for a week, and then I'll send you where the would-be murderer can't find you."

At the end of a week she gave him a liberal sum of money, and said:

"Take Robbie (her son) and go to this place"—handing him a piece of paper on which a few lines were written—"and stay there until you see me."

He took the money and the paper and prepared to obey.

Whatever she bade him do he believed implicitly in.

Robbie knew where he was going—to an aunt in the Western part of the state—and was anxious to go.

He liked Burt, and was willing to go anywhere with him.

They went away in the night to the depot and took a midnight train, and in a day or two it was known all over

the neighborhood that they had gone away to parts unknown.

Another week passed, and nothing more was heard of any attempts to kill anybody.

Marcellus went down to the city to consult with Leech.

"Go back and find out where he is," said the old lawyer, and he went back to resume his visits to the widow's farm, and try to find out where her son was.

He spent a month of fruitless work.

The widow succeeded in keeping their whereabouts a profound secret. In the late fall, after all the city boarders had returned home, she suddenly sold her farm and left for parts unknown.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE WIDOW GREENE.

Four years have passed since the Widow Green sold her farm and went away from her old home.

During all that time not one of her old neighbors heard a word from her, either directly or indirectly.

Nor had any one heard from Burt or the man who had tried to kill him.

The incidents of four years ago had been almost forgotten, when the widow suddenly reappeared and purchased her old home.

Everybody in the neighborhood was surprised as well as pleased, as she was well liked by all.

She moved back to the old place, and with her came her son and Mr. Burt.

The latter was stouter, bronzed and more handsome than ever.

The son was a pretty well grown lad, manly and handsome, while the widow was stouter and as fresh looking as when she went away four years ago.

All the farmhouses opened their doors for the reception of city boarders that summer, as usual, save the widow's.

"Why do you not take boarders, Mrs. Greene?" Farmer Coleman's wife asked.

"Because I do not care to do so," she replied. "I am going to be married in the fall, and I don't want to be bothered with other people's cares in my house."

"Oh, dear! And whom are you going to marry?"

"Mr. Burt."

"What! The young man who was shot at four years ago?"

"Yes. He has been in my employ ever since. I have seen enough of him to satisfy me that I can be very happy with him."

"And any woman could, I should think," said Mrs. Coleman.

"Yes. He is noble hearted and true. I have watched him very closely, and, after he saved my life a year ago, when my carriage horses ran away with me, I have learned to love him," and the widow gave her visitor a very graphic



description of how the young man saved her from certain death at the risk of his own life.

In a few days everybody for miles around knew of Widow Greene's romantic engagement, and many came to see her and congratulate her and the young man.

In the meantime Marcellus Caswell and old Leech had settled down into the belief that they would never see or hear of Bertrand again.

Four years had passed since they last heard of him, and a feeling of security had found lodgment in their minds.

Marcellus had been living a very fast life during the past three years. His utter failure to win Carrie Sedgwick had made him reckless.

He took to drinking and gambling again, and in a little while more than half of his fortune had been dissipated to the winds, and he was frequently hard up for money.

He frequently resorted to Leech for loans.

That wily old shark would not lend him a dollar except on a mortgage on his real estate, saying, frankly:

"In a few years you will be ruined, my boy. Half your property is gone now. It's only a question of time. I'll let you have the money on a mortgage."

"I am going to retrench," said the young man. "That girl broke me up."

"Oh, you broke yourself up. She didn't tell you to drink and gamble. If you had not made such a bad record she would have married you."

"I am going up into the country again this summer and live on ten dollars a week," said Marcellus.

"Do so—and you had better make up your mind to content yourself with that amount for five years, and give your property a chance to put you on your feet again."

"I am going to. I'll go up to Coleman's again. It's the most quiet and inexpensive place I know of."

"Yes, go up there and see if you can hear of the Widow Greene again."

When the warm days came the city people fled to the hills and mountains again.

Mrs. Sedgwick and Carrie went up to Coleman's and engaged board there with a select party of friends.

A week later Marcellus wrote up there for a room, but was informed that he was too late—that the house was full.

"But you might get quarters at Widow Greene's place," Farmer Coleman wrote.

"Ah! I wonder who is running the widow's place now?" muttered Marcellus, when he read the letter. "I am sorry Coleman did not give me the man's name, so I could write to him. It's just the place I would like to go to. I'll write to Coleman to try to engage board for me there."

He wrote to Coleman and asked him to see about it for him.

A few days later he received a reply from Coleman, saying:

"I called at Widow Greene's place as you requested, and he declines to take any boarders."

"Great Scott!" gasped Marcellus. "What does he mean? Has the widow returned to the old place, or does he simply mean that the man's wife refuses to take boarders?"

"Hanged if I don't run up there and see about it," he said, after a few moments' thought, and in a couple of days he was on his way up the river.

He arrived at Coleman's about noon, when the city boarders were having a gay time on the lawn under the shade trees.

Three of the young people in the party knew him, and gave him quite a welcome when they saw him.

Farmer Coleman met him and gave him a hearty reception.

"You're just in time, Caswell," he said. "The Widow Greene will be here in an hour, and——"

"The Widow Green!" he gasped.

"Yes, I wrote you that I called on her and——"

"You said the 'Widow Greene's place,' and I did not understand that she was here herself."

"Oh, she came back several months ago and bought the old place again. We are all glad to have her back again."

"Of course."

And Marcellus looked as uneasy as one possibly could under such circumstances.

"We are quite full of boarders this season," continued the farmer, "and I am sorry that you did not apply in time to secure room. Mrs. Sedgwick and her daughter now have the room you used to have."

"Mrs. Sedgwick!"

"Yes, a widow lady and her daughter, a young lady some twenty-five years of age. Do you know them?"

"Yes—that is, I used to know them. I am really sorry you have no room for me. I shall go back on the evening train."

"I may have a vacant room in a couple of weeks, and if you want one I can let you know. Of course you will remain with us to dinner?"

"No; I will go back to the depot and wait for the next down train."

"Ah! There is the Widow Greene now," and the farmer hastened to meet and welcome the widow and her scort, Mr. Burt, leaving Marcellus standing on the piazza.

He stood like one rooted to the spot when he saw his half brother coming toward the house with the widow.

Just at that moment Carrie Sedgwick came downstairs and passed out on the piazza, and looked in the direction of the widow and her escort.

It was a moment of supreme desperation for Marcellus. Her recognition of Bertrand would ruin all.

How to prevent it was the one question for him to solve.

"I'll attack him furiously!" he said to himself. "The women will fly to their rooms in terror. I'll knock him down and kick him about so that he'll be carried home without Carrie seeing him," and he gave a yell and rushed forward with a heavy cane upraised.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## OUT OF THE LIVING DEATH.

The widow saw the hostile demonstration and screamed. The blow descended upon Bertrand's head with crushing force, and he fell to the ground like a log.

The women screamed and fled to their rooms—all but Carrie Sedgwick.

She had seen Bertrand just in time to recognize him as the blow descended upon his head, and as she screamed she sprang forward and threw herself upon him.

Two gentlemen darted forward and caught Marcellus, so as to prevent further mischief.

"Oh, Bertrand! Bertrand, my own love!" screamed Carrie. "They told me you were dead! Speak to me! Speak to me and tell me you are not dead!" and she kissed his face frantically as she called his name.

The Widow Green was dumfounded at what she saw and heard.

She could scarcely believe her senses.

Who was this young woman who was calling upon Bertrand so passionately, and telling him that they had said he was dead?

She could stand it no longer.

"Woman!" she said, springing forward and grasping Carrie by the arm. "Who are you, and what does this mean?"

"He is Bertrand Caswell. They told me he was dead!" cried Carrie, who did not even notice who it was that questioned her.

Marcellus made frantic efforts to free himself from the grasp of his captors.

But they held him fast, tying his hands behind him and making a prisoner of him.

In the meantime Carrie was crying and going on over Bertrand at a terrible rate, and the Widow Green was about to pitch in and inaugurate a hair pulling war on the spot, when Bertrand opened his eyes and glared around him.

"Where is he?" he asked. "Don't let him get away."

"Who?" Carrie asked.

"The masked burglar!" he replied. "He hit me on the head and knocked me down—but where am I? I was in my room when he struck me?" and he glared around like one in a daze.

Carrie screamed out.

"Oh, he is himself again! He is himself again!"

"What's the matter, Carrie?" Bertrand asked, looking at her in very great surprise, as he was assisted to his feet.

"Oh, Bertrand! Do you know me?" Carrie asked.

"Why, yes. You are Carrie Sedgwick, but where are we? What has happened to bring us here?"

"Do you know me, Mr. Burt?" the Widow Greene asked.

He looked up at her pale face for a moment or two, and then said:

"No, I do not; and my name is not Mr. Burt."

The widow gave a groan and sank to the ground in a

death-like swoon, at which the ladies screamed and rushed to and fro in the widest excitement.

"Who is the lady?" Bertrand asked, wiping the blood from his face, as it trickled down from the wound on his head.

"She is a lady who has been very kind to you," said Coleman. "Come into the house, and let's see how much you are hurt."

They led him into the house and proceeded to wash the blood from his wound.

But he wanted to know how he came there, and asked a dozen times:

"Where am I, and how did I get here?"

Carrie was the only one who could explain, save Marcellus, and she was too much overcome to do so at once.

By and by she came to him and sat down by his side as he reclined on a lounge, and said:

"Bertrand, do you remember what has happened to you?"

"I recollect that when I came into my room last night, with \$1,000 in my pocket, which I had received from my guardian with which to pay for a horse, a man with a mask on his face sprang at me and struck me a terrible blow on the head. I don't remember anything more. What has happened since then? How did I come to be here, and where am I, anyhow?"

"Thank God! I shall be cleared at last!" she exclaimed.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, Bertrand, what a mystery is revealed to-day! Five years have passed over our heads since that night, and——"

"Five years!"

"Yes, five long, weary years. You were sent to the madhouse and afterward published as dead and buried, and your brother, Marcellus has received your estate."

Bertrand looked at her in dumfounded amazement.

"I must be dreaming," he said.

"I would to God that it was all a dream!" and then she began and told the story as she knew it, while the victim and the listeners sat spellbound by the terrible recital.

"Five years dead," muttered Bertrand, "my estate divided, and yet I live. I can't understand it."

"I think I can see through the whole thing," said a young man, one of Coleman's boarders, who was a young lawyer of considerable promise. "The blow you received on the head from that masked burglar made you insane. I remember reading the accounts published in the papers at the time, and of Miss Sedgwick's singular connection with it. You were sent to a madhouse, and in a few weeks your death and burial were published in all the city papers. Your guardian turned your estate over to your half brother, who is here now, and who awhile ago knocked you down with a heavy cane. That blow restored you to your normal mental condition."

"Five years," murmured Bertrand. "It seems like a dream. And I've been wandering about ever since and working on a farm," and he looked at his hardened, sun-browned hands with amazement. "And you were my good angel, Carrie, till they took me to the madhouse! Well! Well!"

"There must be a conspiracy somewhere," suggested the



young lawyer, "in which your half brother and your guardian were engaged."

"Yes," said Carrie, "for Marcellus showed me a dispatch from the keeper of the madhouse that Bertrand was dead. The guardian and Marcellus both attended the funeral and afterward told me all about it."

"That shows a deep, diabolical conspiracy somewhere," remarked the young lawyer.

"Yes," said Bertrand. "I want to see to this at once. I'll go down to-morrow."

"Do you want to see your half brother?" the young lawyer asked.

"Yes—bring him here."

Marcellus was brought before him.

They gazed at each other in astonishment.

"I won't ask you a single question, Marcellus," said Bertrand, looking him full in the face. "You are my father's son. I don't want you exposed any more than I can help. If you will remain under guard here two days until I can see Leech and settle with him, I will try to save you. If not, you must take the consequences."

"I will remain here until you settle with him," said Marcellus. "You will find that he is more to blame than I."

Bertrand asked that he be kept under guard for two days, offering to pay two men well for the trouble of doing so.

Then he and the young lawyer, whom he had engaged to assist him, started for New York.

Before leaving he asked to see Carrie Sedgwick.

She came to him radiant and happy.

"I want to thank you for your kindness to me," he said, "and to say that when I recover my property I want to shew you how much I appreciate you."

She blushed like a rose, and said:

"That is not necessary."

"I think it is," was the reply, as he shook hands with her before getting into the carriage that was to convey him to the depot.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CONCLUSION.

Mr. J. Marley Leech, the old lawyer and manager of estates, was seated in his office, poring over his morning papers, when the clerk ushered in a young lawyer by the name of Kingsley.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Kingsley?" the old lawyer asked, as he laid down the young lawyer's professional card.

"I have come to inquire about a young man who was once a ward of yours—a certain Bertrand Caswell. Do you know where he is?"

"No, I do not. He has been dead about five years. Why do you ask about him?"

"A client of mine wants to establish his relationship to him."

"For what purpose?"

"I really don't know."

"If it is to claim any property, I have to say that his half brother, in the absence of any nearer kin, took all the property. Here is a receipt for the property which I turned over to him," and he showed him the receipt for the property which Marcellus had signed.

Young Kingsley looked at the receipt very closely and handed it back to the old lawyer.

"How long did you say he had been dead?"

"About five years."

"Where did he die?"

"In a madhouse. Here are some published accounts of his death and burial," and he took a large envelope from a drawer and opened it.

It was full of slips of newspaper cuttings, which he showed to Kingsley.

"Ah! I see that you were at the funeral yourself!"

"Ah, yes! I was present and saw the poor fellow decently buried."

Just then Bertrand walked in and confronted him.

Leech looked up at him for a moment or two, and then gave a groan, dropped into a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

"The game is ended, Mr. Leech," said Kingsley, "and the only way you can save yourself is to make a transfer of enough of your property right now and here to cover Mr. Caswell's estate. It was worth \$250,000 five years ago. It is worth \$300,000 to-day. What will you do about it?"

"I will settle," said the lawyer, "when I have seen Marcellus Caswell."

"Then you will have to lie in jail for safekeeping. You may settle now, and then look to him for redress, if you like."

The old lawyer went to his safe and took therefrom papers representing a large amount of property. He spent the entire day making transfers to Bertrand Caswell, till enough had been given up to cover the estate that had been left to Bertrand by his father.

"Now, you can settle with Marcellus in your own way," said Bertrand. "I don't want to go to law with anybody. You can explain matters to the public in your own way. I shall tell them that I have never been dead at all, and that my estate has been returned to me unimpaired."

The old lawyer was crushed completely. He made no reply to the young victim of his diabolical plotting, but stood in the center of the room glaring like one dazed by some sudden, unexpected calamity.

"Marcellus is under arrest up at Coleman's," added Bertrand, as he turned to leave the office. "I shall order his release by telegraph."

He then left, accompanied by Kingsley, and went to the courthouse to have the deeds of the property transferred to him properly recorded.

That done, he telegraphed to Coleman's to release Marcellus and let him come to the city.

As soon as he was left alone Leech gave a deep, despairing groan and sank down in his chair.



"Ruined!" he groaned. "Ruined in my old age, and by my own doing! A clean loss of over \$125,000, for I can never recover a dollar from Marcellus. I can't sue him without betraying my own crime. Oh, God, what a fool I have been!"

He paced the office like a mad lunatic, pulling his hair and groaning in an agony of pain.

"I told so many that I had seen him buried," he groaned, "and now they will be asking me questions. I can't stand it. I'll have to leave my property in the hands of an agent and go abroad to live. I have enough to live on, and I may as well rest. Good Lord! Can I ever rest with this load upon my shoulders? I'll wait and see what Marcellus will do. He'll never give up a cent, I know. I am punished as I ought to be. It is just. I deserve it all."

Two days later Marcellus came to the old villain's office.

They glared at each other like two lunatics.

"We are ruined!" groaned the lawyer.

"I don't know about being ruined," said the gambler, "but we have played and lost. I tried to prevent Carrie Sedgwick from recognizing him by knocking him down. The blow restored him to his right mind and ruined everything."

"He has been here, and to save both of us from arrest and imprisonment I made good his whole fortune to him out of my own property. Of course, you will return to me what is left of your share."

"Of course I won't!" replied the gambler. "You have made more than that out of your management of the estate. Besides, you are the cause of my being cut off in my father's will. I won't return a dollar."

"You will—you shall!" screamed the old lawyer, springing at him with the mad fury of a lunatic.

Marcellus was amazed at the fierce onset.

There was no other person in the office at the time, the clerk having gone out to lunch.

To save himself, the gambler seized him by the throat.

The long, bony fingers of the old lawyer closed around his throat at the same time.

Both clutched with such terrible ferocity that their eyes bulged out, their faces turned purple, and they sank down to the floor in the throes of strangulation.

Their grasp grew stronger as the terrible spasms of death came on, and when the clerk came back half an hour later he found them both dead, clutching each other's throat with such terrible tenacity that he could not release them.

Of course their tragic death caused a great sensation throughout the city. By degrees the history of the diabolical plot leaked out. It was a great sensation.

People read daily some new developments in the case, and a number of reputations suffered.

Dr. Crabbe escaped prosecution only because there were no witnesses against him. Bertrand could not be a witness for the reason that he could not recollect anything about it. But while he escaped the clutches of the law, he could not avoid the terrible whip of public opinion. His guilt was plain, and the press and people lashed him unmercifully.

Bertrand's version of the attack of the burglar in his room

on that eventful night completely exonerated Carrie Sedgwick from all unjust suspicions, and the district attorney so declared in open court. A host of friends congratulated her on the removal of the cloud that had so long hung threateningly over her.

The Widow Green suffered such a terrible shock from the sudden turn her love affair had taken that she was ill for a long time. The doctor declared that brain fever had followed, and that the chances of recovery were much against her.

But she slowly recovered and was nursed back to life by kind, sympathetic friends.

In the meantime Bertrand had sent a trusty friend up there to learn all the particulars of his life while on Widow Greene's place. When he heard how kind the fair widow had been to him he deeply regretted that he could not ratify the engagement of marriage made while he was insane.

But he paid her physician's bill and gave her a check for \$10,000 as a token of his appreciation of her kindness toward him when he was known as another man.

She never married again, for it seems that she could not get over the love she bore the quiet young man who had been so faithful to her interests for four long years. She devoted herself to her farm and good works, and her farm soon became known as the best in that part of the state.

Bertrand was resolved to punish as well as reward. He gave the chief of police as accurate a description of the masked burglar as was possible under the circumstances. To him the five years were as nothing. The incidents of that night were fresh in his mind.

"Do you know that I think that fellow is doing time up the river?" the chief said. "His name is Jack Hubbard, and he was sent up for ten years for burglary. He used to hang around the stables a good deal, and——"

Bertrand started, and exclaimed:

"There was a burly, dark headed looking fellow seated in the doorway when I entered the stable that day to pay for that horse! I believe I would know him if I saw him again!"

"You can run up to Sing Sing and take a look at him if you wish," said the chief.

"Give me a note to the warden of the prison and I will go."

The chief wrote a short note of introduction, and Bertrand took it and went up on the next train.

The warden read the note and then asked the visitor what he wanted.

"I wish to see if I can recognize in Jack Hubbard the burglar who knocked me on the head five years ago," said Bertrand.

"Take a seat there, and I will have him brought in."

Bertrand took a seat and waited for the appearance of the prisoner.

In a few moments he came in, and Bertrand arose and confronted him.

Notwithstanding the changes of five years, and the fact that he was now beardless, Bertrand recognized him as the



man who was sitting in the stable door when he called there to pay for the horse.

"That was a hard blow you gave me, Hubbard," he said to the prisoner.

"Yes, harder than I intended. Glad it didn't do fer yer, though," replied the prisoner, with a frankness that astonished both Bertrand and the warden.

"So am I," returned our hero, "but it came near ruining a young lady."

"Yes, but I was watching all the time. If they had come to trial I would have told all and saved her. I am not as bad as some think."

The warden was a witness to the confession, so Bertrand returned to the city to wait for his term to expire before beginning proceedings against him.

The warden also learned that Jack had, by some means, heard of Bertrand's singular restoration to consciousness, and had made up his mind to confess his act whenever accused, hoping thus to get off with but light punishment.

About a year after his recovery Bertrand asked Carrie Sedgwick to be his wife, and she consented, and in a few months they were married with great eclat at Grace Church. It was a very happy marriage, and two children have come to make joy and sunshine in their home.

Mrs. Sedgwick also married the same year, and lives not far from the elegant home of her daughter.

When his term of service in prison expired Jack Hubbard was tried for the attack and burglary so closely connected with our hero, and received another sentence for a long term. That was the last incident of the series growing out of the tragedy of the man who was "Dead For Five Years." He is alive now, and as happy as any one could well wish to be.

THE END.

Read "BROKER BOB; or, THE YOUNGEST OPERATOR IN WALL STREET," by H. K. Shackleford, which will be the next number (287) of "Pluck and Luck."

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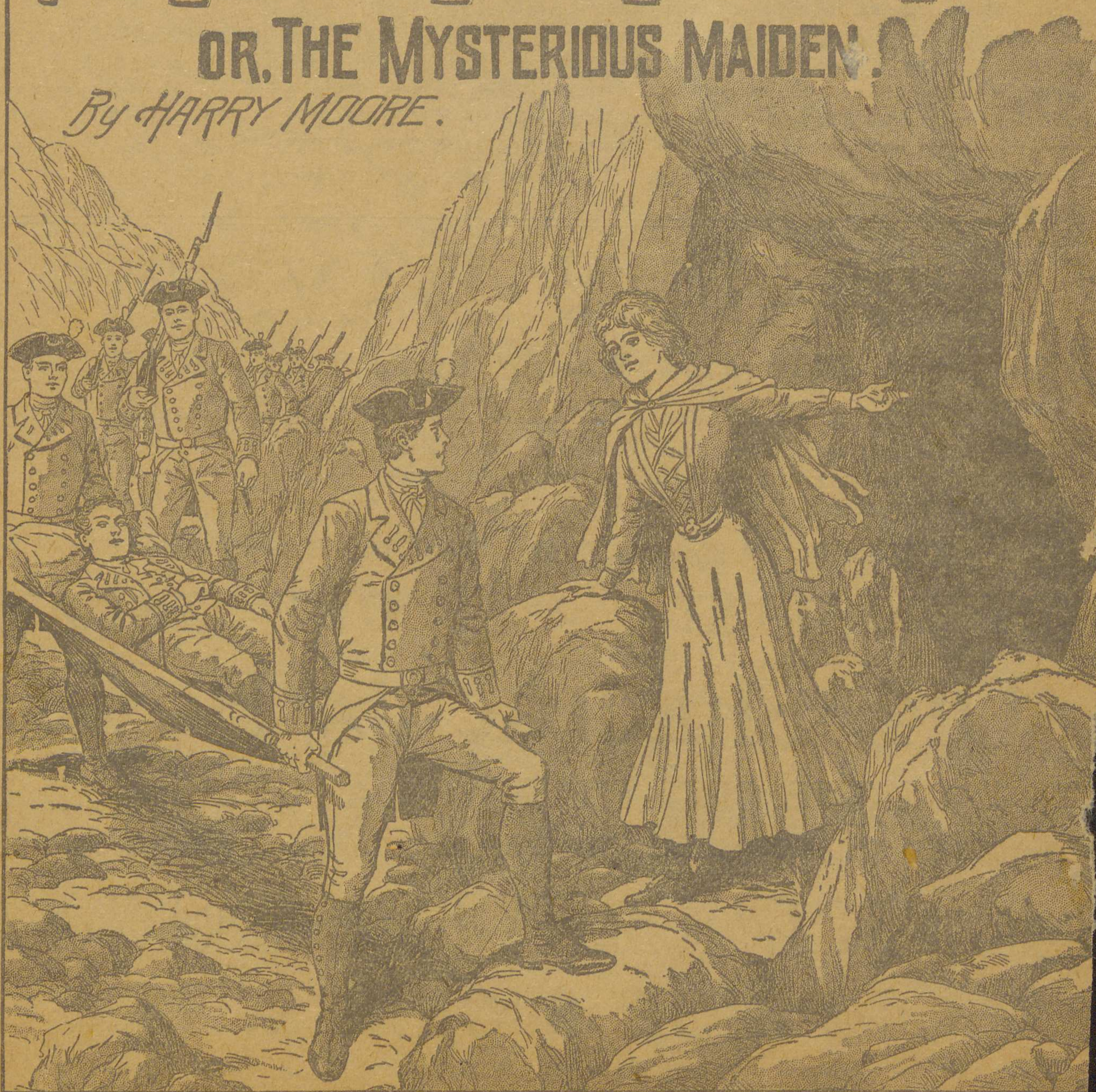
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